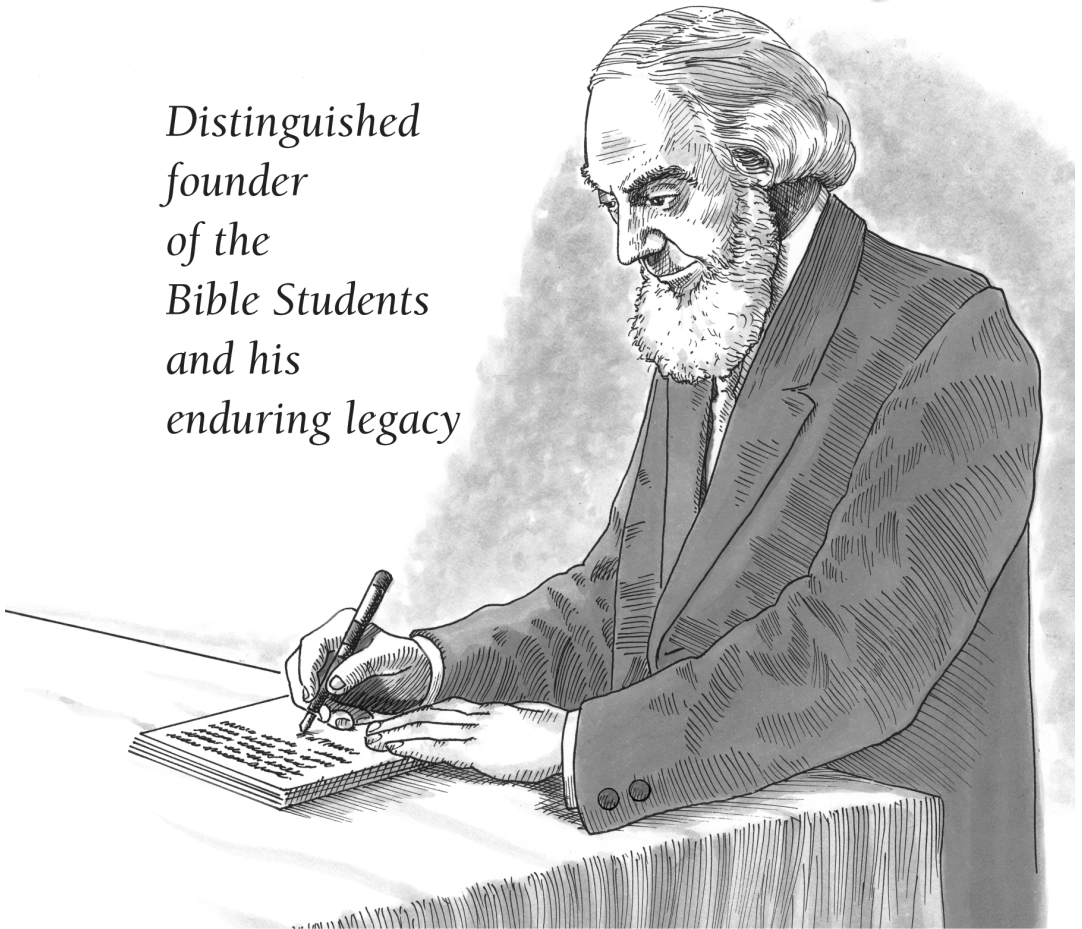


PASTOR C.T. RUSSELL:

Messenger of Millennial Hope

*Distinguished
founder
of the
Bible Students
and his
enduring legacy*



by Charles F. Redeker

PASTOR C. T. RUSSELL:

*Messenger of
Millennial Hope*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

The Kingdom of God, 1961.

The Faith of Our Fathers, 1963.

Sacrifice in the Plan of God, 1967.

A Confirmation of the True Bible Chronology, 1971.

Foregleams of the Messiah, 1982.

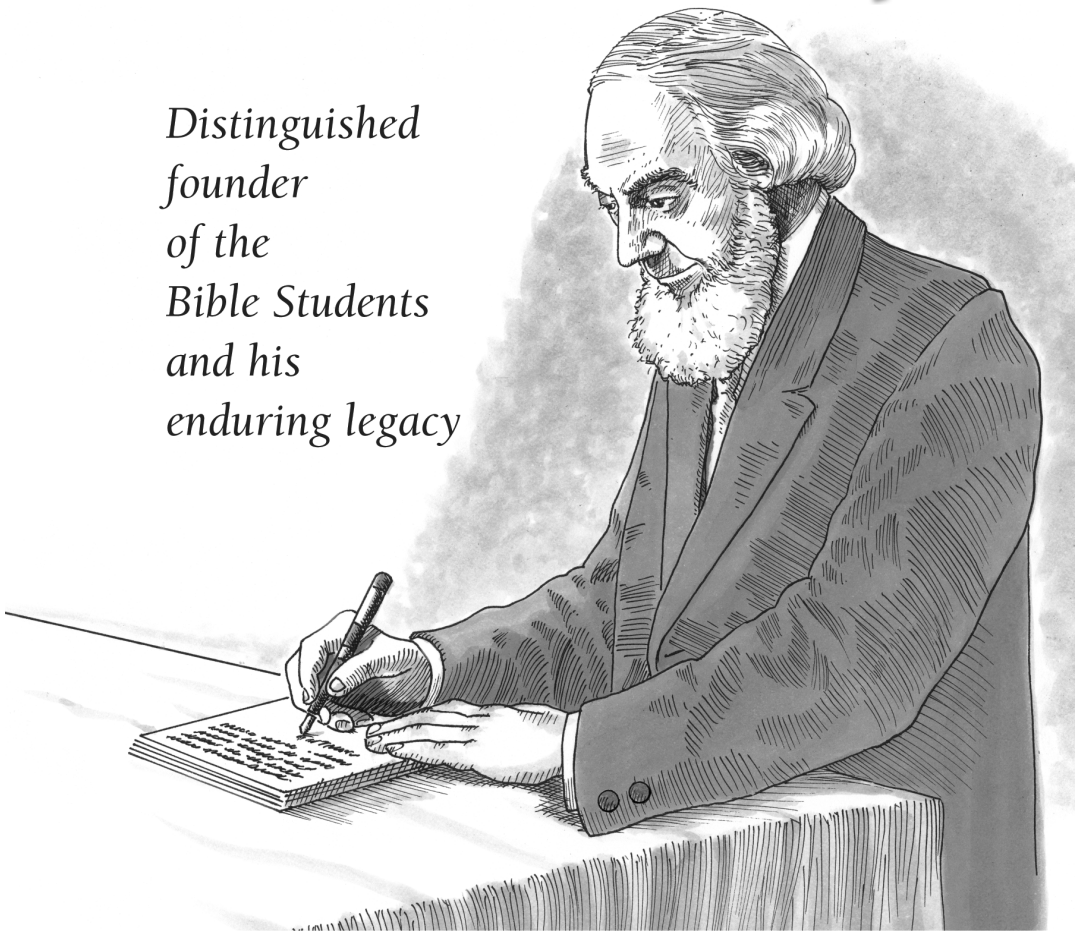
The Seven Churches of Revelation, 1989.

The Biblical 70 Years, 1993.

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by Charles F. Redeker

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Our fervent prayer is that these cooperative efforts of consecrated hearts and hands will redound to the praise of our Heavenly Father and His dear Son, and that His blessing will accompany the circulation of this book. Our heart overflows with thanksgiving for His overruling providences that led us to undertake this work, sustained us through formidable challenges along the way and permitted it to be completed at last.

C.F.R.

Dedication

To my dear mother, Anna Luise, and my beloved wife, Elaine Lois—the two most special people in my life.

It was my mom who about seventy years ago directed me to the Lord, instilled reverence and faith, helped me to memorize Scripture and taught me to pray.

And it is my precious helpmate, at my side now for more than fifty years in our consecrated walk before the Lord, whose cooperation, encouragement and diligent efforts have been instrumental in bringing this work to fruition.

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Introduction

NEARLY ninety years after the death of the illustrious American preacher, Pastor Charles T. Russell, we are prone to ask a number of searching questions. Why is it that so little is heard today of the man who captured the hearts and intellects of so many and inspired faith and hope in the message of the Bible? After all, here was someone who, by any standard, had made a stunning impact on the religious scene of his day.

In 1911, the *London Graphic* wrote that he was reputedly “the most popular preacher in America”; of whom George Swetnam, the official historian for the Pittsburgh Bicentennial in 1958-1959 wrote, “Pastor Russell traveled constantly, covering more than a million miles [by train], delivering more than thirty thousand sermons and lectures ... writing books totaling over fifty thousand pages, which have reached a circulation of more than twenty million copies.” And of whom it was noted by *The Continent*, a publication often opposed to the Pastor, that “His [syndicated] writings are said to have a greater newspaper circulation every week than those of any other living man; greater, doubtless, than the combined circulation of the writings of all the priests and preachers in North America.”¹

How strange, then, that so little should be known today about the distinguished ministry of this figure and that almost a blackout of information has been imposed against him. Until fairly recently, there was hardly a religious guide to churches of America that properly listed either Pastor Russell’s name or the Bible Student group that he founded. Further, most of the standard encyclopedias and reference works ignored him completely. Yet this was certainly not

the case for numerous of his religious contemporaries, such as Dwight L. Moody, John N. Darby, William G. Morehead, T. DeWitt Talmage, Henry W. Beecher, Charles G. Finney, Lyman Abbott, Billy Sunday, and a host of other well-known Christian leaders.²

More pointedly we ask, why did the ministry of this one man arouse the ire and fierce opposition of almost all of orthodox Christendom? What was it about him that caused both Catholic and Protestant leaders alike to close ranks against him? Viewing the intensity of this conflict, Professor S. A. Ellis, a Southern educator who himself was a neutral observer, declared:

“Pastor Russell stands out prominently as a target for the pulpits and religious press of the country today. I believe there is no one more bitterly persecuted, harshly condemned, woefully misrepresented and misunderstood than this fearless, conscientious man of God. No infidel writer, such as Hume, Voltaire or Ingersoll, ever suffered such ruthless attacks as have been made upon Mr. Russell.”³

The details of this controversy and the full answer to the enigma raised will become evident as our story unfolds in the pages to follow. A powerful reform movement was begun which would focus upon areas of belief and practice that were considered sacrosanct and untouchable by the established churches for many centuries. Pastor Russell would also champion the cause of end-time Bible prophecy that had stirred especially in Adventist circles. Thus he would boldly proclaim the nearness of God’s Millennial Kingdom on earth. But such a message held no appeal for the established clergy, who generally considered it misguided, crude, and even fantastic.

Moreover, in carrying out this distinctive ministry and in attempting to restore the spirit of the early Christian believers, the Pastor found it necessary to oppose certain key components of what had become orthodox church doctrine. He considered these a part of the quasi-Christian beliefs that were not introduced until the third and fourth centuries, when Christianity became fashionable to the world. During the Dark Ages, these beliefs were further developed into dogmas and given the stamp of orthodoxy by theologians and

church councils. But Pastor Russell regarded such concepts as God in Trinitarian form, the Immortality of the soul and eternal torture in Hell-fire as corruptions of the original faith that were not supported by the Bible.

This amounted to a direct challenge to the authority of the established churches and, because of the Pastor's widespread influence and popularity, necessitated a vigorous and united response. Such action, without here entering into the pros and cons of the issues, might be considered inevitable under the circumstances. But the disturbing aspect to every fair-minded observer is the nature of the attack that commenced against the Pastor and the seemingly ruthless methods used to destroy his ministry, continuing to this very day.

Later we will be describing some of the highlights in the efforts of the orthodox clergy to oppose the teachings of Pastor Russell. They certainly had a reason to be alarmed over the Pastor's unrelenting attacks on their creeds and beliefs and his characterization of these as being contrary to the noble character of God and not grounded in the Word of God, the Bible. As we shall see, some attempts were made to meet the Pastor's objections along Scriptural and scholarly lines—even in formal public debates—but to little avail. The Pastor was able to hold his ground Biblically and defend the simplicity and purity of the faith of the early church which he upheld, and he continued to gain converts from the various denominations. Thus, something more had to be done by his opponents.

When such straightforward attempts to meet the Pastor on the issues failed, a second line of attack was adopted. If the character of the man could be shown to be blemished, then, in the minds of upright Christian believers, his teachings and works would fall accordingly. But in the pursuit of this objective, were exaggerations, distortions, and even falsifications of facts employed? Was it a fair appraisal of his life and character, or was it a despicable attack which knew no limits, designed with but one goal in mind—to destroy his reputation utterly? The methods employed by the clergy in this regard must be thoroughly explored, to determine whether they were honest and transparent, or basically unjust and unchristian.

The early years of a new century seem to be an ideal time for reviewing the past and placing the ministry of Pastor Russell in its correct historical perspective. Often fondly called “Millennium’s prophet,” he became the leading voice pointing to the nearness of the long-promised Kingdom of God upon earth and the blessings that lay in store. Instead of preaching doom and gloom, the fear of Hell-fire and a cataclysmic ending of the world, he projected a refreshing note of gladness and hope, and called for renewed Bible study without the shackles of church creeds and dogmas.

It is a heart-warming story to recount how the grandson of European immigrants to America forsook a lucrative career in his field and, without the benefit of higher religious education, devoted himself wholly to the pursuit of a knowledge of the true God. Moreover, it is sobering to note how his study of the Bible convinced him that God’s character and Plan had been misrepresented by orthodox Christianity and necessitated a whole new approach to recapture the Truths that had been lost. And finally, it is inspiring to see how he went about proclaiming far and wide the Gospel message—the good news of Messiah’s Kingdom, which he now felt was imminent.

Part One of this presentation will portray the highlights of Pastor Russell’s dynamic ministry. This will include reviewing how he sought to revive the great Truths taught by Jesus and the apostles; depicting the distinguishing features of the Bible Student congregations he organized; and noting his impact upon the established mainline churches. We will see how his vigorous preaching campaigns not only catapulted him into the public limelight but also prompted intense opposition from the orthodox clergy, as already touched upon.

Part Two will explore the distinctive doctrines of the Bible Student movement, noting how they fit into the larger spectrum of Christian belief and church affiliation. Here will be seen how the Pastor emphasized the authority of the Bible itself rather than established church creeds; how his fundamental teachings reflected the simple beliefs of the early church before it became influenced by haughty theologians and politically dominated councils; and how a major emphasis on prophetic expectations provided a unique end-of-the-age character to the movement.

Part Three will give particular emphasis to the innumerable attacks made upon the integrity of Pastor Russell, both during his

lifetime and after his demise. Many of these are cleverly crafted and emotionally charged to discredit the Pastor and dissuade Truth seekers from honestly examining his teachings. Here especially we are convinced that impartial, straightforward research will draw together the actual facts of the case and permit an informed and fair judgment to be made.

In God's sight, the true worth of a man is to be found in his character. Our objective here is to direct the floodlight of truth upon the Pastor, that his real self might be fully revealed. It is our conviction that in so doing the nobility of his attributes and high moral standards will emerge clearly, exposing the misrepresentations of his foes and fittingly matching his zealous and far-reaching proclamation of the Gospel.

Part Four will then focus on the closing days of the Pastor's ministry and its immediate aftermath. His followers had been keenly disappointed by the failure of long-anticipated Kingdom expectations in 1914, then almost crushed by the Pastor's unexpected death in 1916. But no one could have imagined the dramatic consequences that would follow—conspiracy and apostasy within the midst of the directorate of the organization—resulting in new leadership with radical changes in spirit, doctrine and policy.

After following the Pastor's earthly labors to completion, we will pause to note how the Scriptures portray the unique role he carried out. Several distinct pictures, including "that wise and faithful servant," "the seventh messenger" and "the man with the writer's inkhorn," will be examined and discussed.

Finally, Part Five will spell out the enduring legacy left by Pastor Russell. Picking up the historical thread with the major doctrinal and organizational changes that followed his death, we will describe the widespread state of confusion that prevailed, culminating in large-scale withdrawals from the Watch Tower Society. Through it all, the Bible Students as originally founded managed to reorganize and become sharply distinguishable from those who had usurped power and who later became known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

Also included will be a sketch of contemporary Bible Student groups, showing how they are carrying forward the original vision and teachings of their founding Pastor. Through various congregations, ministries, publications and other means, their efforts in

edifying the household of faith and witnessing to the world continue unabated. We trust that thus the Bible Students will be seen in their true colors—as highly motivated, vibrant Christians engaged in the work of the Lord in these End Times.

Endnotes: Introduction

1. *Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick* newsletter, “A Pastor of Excellence,” Oct. 1996, p. 1; quoting from *The London Graphic* for Apr. 8, 1911, *The Continent*, and George Swetnam in *Where Else But Pittsburgh* (Davis and Warde, Inc., 1958), p. 110.

Additional favorable assessments of Pastor Russell’s ministry are found in the *Bible Students Newsletter* article, “70 Years Ago: The Best and Most Widely Known Minister in the World,” Winter 1986-1987 issue, pp. 10-12. Quotations were taken from the *Overland Monthly* for 1909 and subsequent years; *The Dundee Scotland People’s Journal*, May 1911; the *London Daily Mail*, May 1910; the *Christian Globe*, London, May 5, 1910; and the *Kansas City Weekly Post* editorial, 1913.

2. Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, pp. 275, 288, 291.
3. W. M. Wisdom, *The Laodicean Messenger*, p. 183.

Note: No author is listed on the title page or is elsewhere stated in the book. Some researchers think it was Menta Sturgeon, Pastor Russell’s traveling secretary on his final speaking tour. However, this is contraindicated by the following:

(a) A 1929 Bible book store ad stated that the “Memoirs of Pastor Russell” (subheading of the book) was compiled “by former Pilgrim W. M. Wilson.” (See *The Arian*, Fall 1996.) This was probably an inadvertent typographical error for “Pilgrim W. M. Wisdom.”

(b) Harry G. Nugent, whose mother fondly called W. M. Wisdom her (step) “grandpa,” reported that she definitely believed him to be the author and that her copy of the work had his name penciled on the title page. (Phone conversation, 8/8/2002.)

PART ONE:

LAUNCHING A DYNAMIC MINISTRY

“Tell us, when shall these things be?
And what shall be the sign of thy coming [presence],
And of the end of the world [age]? ...
This gospel of the kingdom
Shall be preached in all the world [earth]
For a witness unto all nations;
And then shall the end come.”

—Matthew 24:3,14

“Behold, the man clothed with linen,
Which had the [writer’s] inkhorn by his side,
Reported the matter, saying,
I have done as thou hast commanded me.”

—Ezekiel 9:11



Pastor Russell at Age 45 (1897)

At the time of this photo, the Pastor had been studying the Bible and proclaiming its message of Millennial Hope for over twenty years.

1

Birth of the Movement

IN THE latter part of the nineteenth century, the religious movement known today as the Bible Students had its beginning. In some respects, it resembled various earlier independent reform groups that had sprung up across America. However, in many key ways, it added its own energy and uniqueness of character. All of these groups clearly differed from the mainline churches in some important emphases, and the Bible Students were to take the lead in shaping these into a distinctive end-time position of imminent Millennial expectations. Let us note some of the outstanding events that led up to the birth of this group.

Historical Setting

The Reformation of the sixteenth century inspired by Martin Luther and others had struck a bold blow against the medieval church and emphasized the rightful place of the Bible in its stead. This began a sweeping work of doctrinal cleansing with periodic bursts of fervor in ensuing years that was particularly strong in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Especially in the United States, the atmosphere of political and religious freedom stimulated the birth of independent religious movements that contributed to a further refining process.

The time had come for the recovery of yet additional Biblical Truths that had been lost or corrupted since the days of the early church. Diverse groups and various religious leaders took part in these reform efforts which were general in their scope. They were united solely by reliance on the Bible as the only authority for faith, and the desire to return to the simplicity of the original Gospel of primitive Christianity. Active participants were the “New Light Presbyterians” (1803) under Barton Stone, “The Disciples” (1809) under Thomas Campbell (“Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where they are silent we are silent”), “The United Brethren in Christ” (1800) under Philip Otterbein and Martin Boehm, “The Evangelical Church” (1803) under Jacob Albright, and “The Unitarian Churches” (1815) under Henry Ware and William Channing.¹

Perhaps the most thorough of all the reforms was brought about in the 1830s and 1840s by the “Millerite movement,” which attracted widespread attention to a literal expectation of Christ’s return. Under the leadership of William Miller, it swept across the Eastern and Middle states and profoundly affected many communities. It has been said of it that “without question it made a greater impress upon the consciousness of the American populace within the short space of thirteen years than any other religious development.” At its height, from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand loyal core believers were attracted from a cross-section of churches. They created a mighty stir across the land and aroused widespread interest in Bible study and the fulfillment of prophecy.² Though ending in keen disappointment in 1844, it left a sanctifying mark upon the believers and providentially prepared the way for fresh revealments of Truth yet to come.

By the year 1846, two contrary forces were at work in the Protestant religious world. On the one hand, scattered small groups of dedicated believers had separated themselves from the larger, established bodies and were in agreement on certain basic points of Bible teaching:

- ◆ The Bible revered as God’s inspired Word and sole source of authority
- ◆ Salvation by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ
- ◆ Simplicity of church organization

- ◆ The priesthood of believers and their equality in God's sight
- ◆ Immortality a gift of God to the faithful, not inherent in the soul
- ◆ The dead sleeping peacefully until the Resurrection
- ◆ Baptism by immersion, a symbol of full Consecration to God
- ◆ The need for personal holiness in the Christian life
- ◆ The nearness of the Second Coming of Christ
- ◆ The purpose of the Coming to set up God's Kingdom on earth, with blessings dispensed by Christ and his church.³

On the other hand, the Evangelical Alliance had just been formed in London. This was an organization of more than fifty orthodox church groups that wanted to maintain the basic beliefs of evangelical Protestants and to promote interdenominational unity. As such it is often recognized as the early forerunner of the modern ecumenical movement. Some of the nine cardinal points it stressed were:

- ◆ The Trinity and unity of the "Godhead"
- ◆ The Incarnation of the Son of God—Christ appearing in the First Advent as the God-man in the form of flesh
- ◆ The Immortality of the soul
- ◆ The Resurrection of the body
- ◆ The eternal punishment of the wicked in Hell-fire
- ◆ The Christian ministry (clergy) as Divinely instituted—Ordination claimed as an exclusive right of member groups.⁴

Thus some of the very doctrines which were being discarded in the light of advanced Bible study, particularly that of human Immortality, were given new emphasis and held up as the mark of orthodoxy. In this way, the Alliance was perpetuating what some reformers viewed as corruptions of Truth that had been introduced in the great falling away of the third and fourth centuries and had become entrenched during the Dark Ages. It thus tended to bind together the large groups of "nominal" Christians in contrast to the little handful who had been "cleansed" of these errors.

A Leader Is Born

As the nineteenth century progressed beyond the mid-way mark, the stage was set for some rather unique additional developments. In the year 1852, unnoticed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Charles Taze Russell was born on February 16, the son of Joseph L. and Eliza Birney Russell. His parents were both of Scotch-Irish lineage and members of the Presbyterian Church. Being deeply religious, they brought up their children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Under this godly influence, young Charles became interested in theology, joined the Congregational Church and the Y.M.C.A., and became active in local missionary work.⁵

Charles would later recall that his mother (who died when he was but nine years old) had revealed to him when he was about seven that she had dedicated him to the Lord in the same way that Hannah had committed her son, Samuel, in Old Testament times. Eliza Russell’s prayer was that, “In God’s providence you may become a minister of the Gospel.”⁶

It is evident in this story of Charles’ early years that a good groundwork had been laid to steer him in the direction of Christian service, perhaps even to the ministry. But who could have foreseen that it would soon result in the formation of a zealous new reform group, conservative in theology, but with sharply defined Millennial views and other distinctive beliefs that would set it apart from the mainline churches? This indeed was to be the significant outcome—the opening of a remarkable new chapter on the religious scene in America, as we shall presently see.

Struggles of Faith

Yet, for a time, it seemed most unlikely that Charles Russell would develop such an intense interest in the Bible or pursue the Christian ministry as his main focus. Although he had given his heart to the Lord at age fifteen, he began to experience serious doubts about his religious training and beliefs. In attempting to reclaim a friend to Christianity, he was unable to defend the catechism and especially the belief that a majority of mankind were predestinated to a Hell of eternal torment. He became overwhelmed at

the apparent logic of infidelity and soon became a skeptic himself. He later wrote:

“Then we stopped preaching and began to think and to examine the creeds. We found that the difference between them was trivial. All had the one foundation of heavenly salvation for the few and eternal woe for the thousands of millions. The more we investigated, the more sure we felt that a great mistake had been made; that a real God could not have made such an arrangement as our creeds declared. We threw them all away; and thinking that the Bible was the basis for them all, we threw the Bible after them.”⁷

This proved not to be the end of the matter, however. Young Charles’ heart and mind continued to search for answers:

“Having once known our heavenly Father, we could find no rest without him. Our soul hungered for his love and care. We still held to the great fact that our Universe had an intelligent, personal Creator; for his wisdom and power were before us on every starry night. The more we studied anatomy, the more thoroughly we became convinced that all humanity, yea, every creature, is ‘fearfully and wonderfully made,’ and ... could not have come by chance, could not have ... evolved ... We worshiped the God of wisdom and power, and sought to know more of him, confident that we should find him good ... Surely he who formed the eye to see and the ear to hear and who gave humanity the qualities of justice and love must possess these qualities in infinite measure.

“Thus with the eyes of our understanding we beheld the great God of the universe ... Again we worshiped him, rejoiced that we could have confidence in our God and realize that he had made neither the earth nor the race of mankind in vain, but that he had some wise, just, loving purpose in connection with our creation.”⁸

It was at this point that young Charles decided to turn his inquiring mind in the direction of the Eastern religions, to see if a

satisfying understanding of God, life and the hereafter could be found in their philosophies. But after devoting some time to the investigation of their claims, he found all of them wanting and unworthy of credence—“less rational in some respects, though less fiendish, than our own [denominational church] creeds.”⁹

Gradually, by God’s providence, Charles Russell was led to see a clear distinction between the creeds of men and the true teachings of the Bible. In his own words:

“That which at first threatened to be the utter shipwreck of faith in God and the Bible, was, under God’s providence, overruled for good, and merely wrecked my confidence in human creeds and systems of misinterpretation of the Bible. Gradually I was led to see that though each of the creeds contained some elements of truth, they were, on the whole, misleading and contradictory of God’s Word.”¹⁰

Finally in 1869, seemingly by chance, he came in contact with Adventism. In a dingy hall one evening he listened to an old preacher, Jonas Wendell, and was impressed by what he heard. Though the exposition was not entirely clear, it was sufficient to reestablish his wavering faith in the inspiration of the Bible and draw a distinction between its teachings and the creeds and philosophies of men. Thereafter, he was able eagerly to renew his own studies along these lines.

Return to Bible Study

Instilled with fresh enthusiasm, in 1870 Charles Russell and a few acquaintances in Pittsburgh and nearby Allegheny (now a part of Pittsburgh) got together and began an independent, systematic study of the Bible. He understood that they were living “somewhere near the close of the Gospel age,” when the watching ones of God’s children should come to a better understanding of His Word. The Bible class included Charles Russell, his father Joseph Russell, his sister Mae, William I. Mann, A. D. Jones (a clerk in the family clothing business), W. H. Conley (a local banker), and a handful of others. They were determined to learn what the Bible itself revealed of the character of God and of the Divine purpose for mankind.¹¹

In October 1876, Charles Russell was elected Pastor of this Bible study group, marking what might be considered the start of the Bible Student movement.¹² To put this in historical perspective, we should note that the year 1876 was exactly one hundred years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence and just eleven years after the end of the Civil War that had ravaged the States.

In focusing directly on the Bible itself, the Allegheny study class rejoiced to learn of the all-encompassing love of God and of the provisions He had made for the blessing of all mankind. Gradually they were getting an overall view of God's Plan of Salvation and discarding many of the commonly held erroneous views of the churches. They began to understand that:

"All must be awakened from the tomb in order that God's loving plan might be testified to them, and how all who exercise faith in Christ's redemptive work and render obedience in harmony with the knowledge ... they **will then** receive, shall ... be brought back into full harmony with God, and be granted everlasting life. This we saw to be the Restitution work foretold in Acts 3:21." ¹³

Thus for six years Charles Russell and his associates intensely studied the Scriptures and sought the Lord's guidance in revealing matters not yet clearly understood. It was a period of growth in grace and in knowledge for them and of laying up a strong foundation for more light to follow.

Early Associates

Pastor Russell freely acknowledged the influence and assistance of other earnest students of the Word in helping to shape his own thoughts and convictions. The Adventists had been instrumental at a critical period in reestablishing his faith in the Bible and subsequently in emphasizing the role of time prophecy in relation to other Truths. In later years he gratefully recalled the part that George Stetson and George Storrs (editor of *The Bible Examiner*) had played during the period 1869 through 1872 in uncovering the broad outlines of God's Plan of Salvation and, equally as important, in "unlearning many long-cherished errors" that had veiled its full

appreciation. “The study of the Word of God with these dear brethren,” he wrote, “led, step by step, into greener pastures and brighter hopes for the world.”¹⁴ The contributions of other denominations and expositors were also acknowledged.

Early in 1876, Charles Russell came across an article on prophetic time in the Adventist journal, *Herald of the Morning*. Expecting the usual presentation of a set time for the literal “burning of the world,” he was surprised to discover instead that the editor, Nelson H. Barbour of Rochester, New York, “was beginning to get his eyes open ... that the object of our Lord’s return is not to destroy, but to bless all the families of the earth, and that his coming would be thief-like, and not in [the] flesh, but as a spirit-being, invisible to men; and that the gathering of his church and the separation of the ‘wheat’ from the ‘tares’ would progress in the end of this age without the world’s being aware of it.” New to Pastor Russell was the cautiously presented thought that our Lord was in fact already **present** invisibly, “as a thief in the night” (stealthily, unawares) to the world, yet made manifest to the earnest, watching saints. (1 Thess. 5:2-4)¹⁵

“Anxious to learn, from any quarter, whatever God had to teach,” Pastor Russell sent for Barbour right away. It proved to be a productive meeting of minds and the beginning of a brief but mutually beneficial relationship in the ministry. Learning that the *Herald of the Morning* had run out of funds, the Pastor financed its continued publishing, became its co-editor and began working closely with Barbour.¹⁶

In 1877 Pastor Russell provided the funds for the writing and publishing of a 196-page book, *The Three Worlds*, jointly produced but authored mainly by Barbour. It was the first book to combine ideas of Jesus’ Ransom Sacrifice and Restitution for the world (as held by the Pastor) with Biblical time prophecies and chronological matters (as viewed by the Adventists). It set forth a lineup of prophecies and time parallels that established Christ’s invisible presence in the autumn of 1874 and became the basis for many ensuing Bible Student chronological beliefs.¹⁷

In 1878, however, Barbour rejected the doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement, and disagreements developed over other

doctrines as well. By the following year, this led to a complete breakup of fellowship and withdrawal of Pastor Russell's support from the *Herald of the Morning* magazine. The Pastor then entrusted John H. Paton (a co-worker of Barbour from Almont, Michigan, who at that time remained loyal) to write a new book, *Day Dawn*, which appeared in 1880. This became the replacement for *The Three Worlds*, and reflected more of the Truths revealed by the advancing light. But its author, after briefly sharing a prominent role in the growing movement, also fell out of favor when he likewise began to deviate on the Ransom doctrine. A second book by Paton—a revised *Day Dawn*—was condemned by the Pastor as contrary to Scripture and caused much disruption and schism. It denied that Adam had fallen into sin or that he needed to be redeemed, and portrayed Jesus as an imperfect man who merely set forth a good example of how to fight against sin.¹⁸

By the summer of 1881, Pastor Russell had ceased fellowshiping with both Barbour and Paton, leaving him almost alone as leader of the movement.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Pastor was not discouraged and faithfully pursued the course which he perceived God was laying out for him. Meantime, the work progressed and prospered greatly, as we shall see.

Growing Enlightenment

Before proceeding, let us retrace our steps for a moment. As already noted, among the beliefs that were grievous to Pastor Russell and his associates was the expectation of Christ's Return in the flesh to be followed by the end of the world—meaning that the earth and all in it except a few "saints" would be burned up and destroyed. A string of failed time settings by other expositors and accompanying crude ideas relating to the Second Advent led Pastor Russell to write a pamphlet entitled *The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return*, with an initial printing of fifty thousand copies in 1877. This pamphlet pointed out that Christ's Return would not be in a visible body as commonly believed, but as a mighty invisible spirit being to reign upon earth, to set up God's long-promised Millennial Kingdom and to bring Restitution blessings to earth's teeming masses.²⁰

Earlier in his ministry, Pastor Russell's attention had been drawn to a Bible chronology first advanced by Rev. Christopher

Bowen of England (about 1830), which indicated that the first six thousand years of man's history had already terminated.²¹ This realization, combined with prophetic understandings gleaned from Adventist sources (as previously discussed), suggested that Christ had returned invisibly as Lord of the Harvest in 1874 and led him to conclude that a gathering and reaping work was then due among God's people. All of this provided the motivation to begin preaching, with great ardor and enthusiasm, the Truths of the Bible that were being unveiled. As the Pastor expressed it:

"The knowledge of the fact that we were already in the harvest period [the end of the age] gave to me an impetus to spread the truth such as I never had before. I therefore at once resolved upon a vigorous campaign for [preaching] the truth."²²

Accordingly, the Pastor determined that the time had come for him to curtail his business cares and to devote full time and energy as well as all of his considerable means "to the great harvest work." In 1877, when only twenty-five years old, he sold his successful men's clothing chain in Philadelphia to concentrate on the work of the ministry. It is reported that when he closed out his interests, they netted him more than a quarter of a million dollars—a small fortune at the time.²³

The Pastor's energy was now given to preaching and extensive traveling that took him to many cities across the land, at first from New England to the Midwest. A main emphasis of his ministry was in pointing to those Bible Truths he felt had been lost through centuries of neglect and contamination with human philosophies. He viewed God's redemptive program as reflecting the great love of the Creator toward mankind, which included provision for even the unsaved. Thus the hope of everlasting life was opened up to all: a heavenly reward for the faithful footstep followers of Christ and an opportunity for life on earth for the remainder of mankind.

This was a time of great excitement for all connected with the movement. To them, the accumulated errors of past centuries were giving way to the flood of new light and clearer insights into the Divine Plan. They became convinced that it was the time of blessedness which had been promised in the prophecies of Daniel 12:12 and

Luke 12:37, when their Lord would return and serve the household of faith with a rich portion of spiritual nourishment.

A Mainstay Journal

As the Pastor traveled and preached, he was able to arouse much interest in the new-found Truths. It soon became evident that a monthly religious journal which fully reflected these beliefs would be helpful in holding and developing the new interest. This led at first to reissuance of the *Herald of the Morning* in a cooperative effort with early associates as previously mentioned. However, when doctrinal differences began to surface in the editorship of the journal, and belief in fundamental concepts such as Substitutionary Atonement through Christ were repudiated, the Pastor withdrew all support. In his own words:

“I therefore understood it to be the Lord’s will that I should start another journal in which the standard of the cross should be lifted high, the doctrine of the ransom defended, and the good tidings of great joy proclaimed as extensively as possible. Acting upon this leading of the Lord, I gave up traveling, and in July, 1879, the first number of *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence* made its appearance.”²⁴

This new publication was issued from Pittsburgh with an initial printing of six thousand copies. Pastor Russell himself became editor, with five others originally listed as regular contributors to its columns. For almost forty years the journal became a mainstay of the movement and was eagerly received by Bible Students everywhere, reaching a peak subscription of about fifty-five thousand by 1915.²⁵

The first words of the journal significantly stated the object of its publication: To fully awaken “the ‘household of faith’ ... to the fact ... that we are living ‘in the last days’ ... of the Gospel Age.” The magazine also pointed out that a new day was dawning with the invisible presence of the Lord. It observed that not only was the End Time becoming “discernible by the close student of the Word,” but also by the world at large through manifestation of many outward signs.²⁶ Subsequent issues elaborated on such signs as global

preparations for war, the decline of spirituality, scientific and technological advances of the new day, growing unrest of the masses, a drive for unity among churches and renewed interest in regathering of the Jews to Palestine.

Counterbalancing the emphasis on prophetic unfolding of events were articles on Christian life and doctrine to assist believers in making progress in the way. These touched on vital areas such as the Ransom Sacrifice, the Atonement, the Sin Offering, the great Covenants and the development of the fruits and graces of the spirit in order to gain greater character likeness to Christ. The two-fold objective was to awaken readers to realities of the new era and “to assist them to ‘put on the **whole** armor of God, that [they] may **be able to stand in the evil day.**’ ” In so doing, the Pastor believed he was actively engaged in the grand work of reaping and gathering together the “wheat” in the Harvest or end of the age, preparatory to the full establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.²⁷

Spreading the Message

The next effort was to organize new Bible classes wherever interest in the “Truth message” was shown. This was done in concert with associated believers and entailed traveling to those areas where subscribers to the *Watch Tower* magazine were located. In the years 1879 and 1880 alone, about thirty congregations were founded in the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, Ohio and Michigan. Pastor Russell himself visited these classes regularly and spent at least a day in intensive Bible study with each group, lecturing and answering questions of interest.²⁸

In later years this procedure of encouraging and serving the brethren at large became characteristic of the Pastor’s ministry and reflected his zeal for the Lord and love for the “Truth people.” Subsequently, hundreds of congregations across the land sprang up and elected him as their beloved “Pastor.” (By 1916, there were twelve hundred such Bible classes worldwide.) They appreciated his doctrine, his exemplary manner of life and his warm, kind personality. In traveling constantly as public lecturer and regularly serving these many classes, Pastor Russell later came to be known as the “ubiquitous [widely-traveled, omnipresent] preacher,” a phrase coined by

the *London Press* (which also said he “had the world for his congregation”).²⁹

One of his earliest major works was a comprehensive booklet entitled *Food for Thinking Christians*, published in 1881. It summarized the main doctrinal views of the Bible Students and exposed what were considered erroneous beliefs of the orthodox churches. It also included a comprehensive “Chart of the Ages” with full explanation, illustrating the Plan of God for developing the church, blessing the world and destroying the incorrigible in “second death.” More than a million copies of the booklet were distributed free of charge in this country and in Great Britain. Pastor Russell personally bore the cost of this project from his own funds, amounting to tens of thousands of dollars.³⁰ The success of this effort led to the formation of the “Watch Tower Tract Society,” which thereupon specialized in the distribution of books and tract materials to further the work of the movement.

That same year, 1881, the Society also put out a call for Christian laborers, termed “colporteurs,” to sell *Watch Tower* subscriptions and distribute various tracts. By 1886 their number had grown to some three hundred workers, mostly part-time, and became an integral part of the ministry. The Pastor urged any and all who had been reached by the Truth message to devote whatever time they could to sharing the good tidings with others by preaching and handing out literature. Some from all walks of life, in this country and abroad, eagerly responded to the call, reflecting the depth of their convictions and the enthusiasm of their leader.³¹

Summary and Reflections

Thus it may be said that the foundations of the Bible Student movement were laid in the critical period from 1876 to 1881. Charles Russell had been elected Pastor of his Bible study group in Allegheny at the young age of twenty-four. Under his untiring leadership, he inspired an ever widening core of earnest Truth seekers to examine their Bibles afresh and to appreciate the blessings of recovered Truths as these were rapidly unfolding.

At this point, two observations are in order:³²

First, it should be noted that it was not Pastor Russell's intention to form a separate religious denomination as such. Part of the reason he plunged so vigorously into the work of harvesting the wheat field of Christendom was that he expected Christ imminently to take his saints home. When this did not occur, the Pastor's emphasis on early church doctrine and practice, topical approach to Bible study and unique end-time prophetic beliefs increasingly gave a distinctive mark to the Bible Students that set them apart from others.

Second, Pastor Russell was not claiming that his teachings were original with him or attempting to portray himself as a prophet. As a careful student of the Word of God, under the Lord's guidance and direction he endeavored to understand the Scriptures by harmonizing their complete testimony on each topic under consideration. But, in so doing, he deeply respected the work of Godly expositors of his day and the past, and was willing to profit from them as he developed his own doctrinal understandings. Thus in spite of some key differences, his teachings reflected concepts much in common with American Protestantism of his day.

From these early beginnings, the movement was destined to grow in stature and make a significant impact both in America and overseas as well. Chapter 2 will examine some of the highlights in this saga of the phenomenal growth and influence of the Bible Students during the Pastor's lifetime.

Endnotes: Chapter 1

1. Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, pp. 168-170, 199.
2. Le Roy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, IV., pp. 443-444; C.T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 115-118.
3. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 119.
4. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, "The Evangelical Alliance," IV., pp. 113-114; Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 119.
5. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), "Biography," Dec. 1, 1916, p. 5997; Timothy White, *A People For His Name* (hereafter cited as White), pp. 14-15.

Note: For many years the *Reprints* have been a useful treasure house of information for the Bible Students since they constitute a comprehensive Bible commentary by Pastor Russell. First printed in book form by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1919 (three years after the death of the Pastor), the *Reprints* contained all the articles that had appeared in the monthly/semi-monthly *Watch Tower* magazines from inception in July 1879 through June 1919. (The magazine was called *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* from the start; in January 1909 the name was changed to *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*.)

When the limited number of copies of the 1919 printing could no longer meet the needs of the next generations of Bible Students, in 1967 the Chicago Bible Students Ecclesia republished the *Reprints*. The page numbering and content of each page remained the same as in the earlier edition to avoid confusion in referencing them, but they were provided in slightly larger print for ease of reading. There were six large bound books plus a slim index book containing four indices: Listings by Elaborated Texts; by Scripture Citations; by Article Titles; and by Topics. This and subsequent editions covered the *Watch Tower* articles from 1879 through 1916. In more recent years, five additional reprintings were undertaken, including loose-leaf and twelve-volume editions. The *Reprints* are now also available on Bible Student Internet Web sites and computer CD ROMs, with expanded index capability by individual words and phrases.

The quotations and citations used herein are from the Chicago Bible Students edition of 1967. Due to the large number of such articles referenced, article titles and dates appear in the Endnotes of the

various chapters but are not repeated in the References section at the back of this book.

6. *Reprints*, “Our Convention Tour No. 1,” July 15, 1911, p. 4853.
7. *Reprints*, “Hope an Outgrowth of Confidence,” Dec. 15, 1914 (hereafter cited as “Hope”), p. 5596.
8. *Reprints*, “Hope,” p. 5596.
9. *Reprints*, “Hope,” p. 5596; *Pastor Russell’s Sermons*, “Creed Idols of Christendom,” pp. 443-446.
10. *Reprints*, “Harvest Gatherings and Siftings,” July 15, 1906 (hereafter cited as “Harvest”), p. 3821.
11. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3821; James B. Parkinson, *The Bible Student Movement in the Days of C. T. Russell*, A-2.
12. *Reprints*, “Prefatory Note” by publisher, dated July 1, 1919, inserted at beginning of bound reprints of original *Watch Tower* magazines covering the period 1879 through 1919 (hereafter cited as “Prefatory Note”).
13. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3821.
14. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3821.
15. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3822.
16. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3822; *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom* (hereafter cited as *Proclaimers*), p. 575.
17. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3822; *Proclaimers*, p. 47.
18. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” pp. 3823-3825; *Proclaimers*, pp. 47-48, 620; White, pp. 24-25.
19. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3824; *Proclaimers*, pp. 47, 620.
20. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” pp. 3821-3822; *Proclaimers*, p. 47.
21. *Reprints*, “And the Door Was Shut,” Oct.-Nov. 1881, p. 289.
22. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3822.
23. *Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* (hereafter cited as *Divine Purpose*), p. 17; Marley Cole, *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, p. 60.
Note: Cole pointed out that such a sum would be equivalent to more than a million dollars in 1955; today, of course, the corresponding value would be considerably greater yet.
24. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3823.
Note: The title of this journal has undergone significant changes through the years. On January 1, 1909, it became *The Watch Tower*

- and Herald of Christ's Presence*. After the death of Pastor Russell, the title was altered by the new management as of January 1, 1939, to read *The Watchtower* (note: one word) *and Herald of Christ's Kingdom*. Still later, on March 1, 1939, it was changed again to *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. When first published, the *Watch Tower* was an eight-page paper, produced once a month. The size was increased to sixteen pages in 1891 and the following year it became a semimonthly magazine. (*Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, p. 724)
25. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3823; *Divine Purpose*, pp. 21, 50.
 26. *Reprints*, “Prospectus,” July 1879, p. 3.
 27. *Reprints*, “Prospectus,” July 1879, p. 3; *Reprints*, “Prefatory Note.”
 28. *Divine Purpose*, p. 23.
 29. W. M. Wisdom, *The Laodicean Messenger* (hereafter cited as *Wisdom*), p. 208.
 30. *Reprints*, “Harvest,” p. 3825; White, pp. 26-27; Wisdom, p. 5.
Note: Wisdom reports that the distribution of the booklets “was said to have been at a cost of \$40,000.00.”
 31. *Reprints*, “Wanted 1,000 Preachers,” April 1881, p. 214; *Divine Purpose*, p. 28.
 32. See also M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, p. 26.



The Pastor in his Study at the Bible House, Allegheny, Pennsylvania (about 1907)
His ministry of preaching, writing, evangelizing and pastoring the flock was based solely on the Bible and projected him into a position of prominence on the religious scene in America.

2

Highlights of Career

WITH THE further expansion of the Bible Student movement, the special talents and enormous abilities of its founder became evident. Whether as writer, lecturer, evangelist, pastoral shepherd or administrator, Pastor Russell seemed to excel in them all. For this, he was to gain wide recognition and acclaim. He was successful at whatever he chose to pursue in the rapidly growing religious undertaking and personally supervised its every phase.

Prodigious Writings

It was the Pastor who produced the vast literature of the movement, then oversaw its publishing and worked out ingenious methods for its mass circulation. The result was an avalanche of books, pamphlets and tracts that streamed forth in every direction. And it was the Pastor who gave Bible discourses in over three hundred cities in the United States and Canada alone—in many of them ten or fifteen times.¹ Yet, as we shall see, with characteristic humility he would admit to no superior traits and refused to boast of his accomplishments or exalt himself.

As Bible Truths continued to unfold in both personal and group studies, the Pastor saw the need for putting forth a comprehensive exposition of the inspired Word that would properly harmonize the entire Bible. He wanted such a treatise to be in a topical format that

would delineate God's principles, laws and promises, as well as explain Scriptural types, symbols, allegories and prophecies, all in their correct time setting. The result was a six-volume series under the heading of *Millennial Dawn* (later retitled *Studies in the Scriptures*), written between 1886 and 1904. To this day many consider it to be one of the most helpful aids to Bible study ever produced, depicting God's majestic Plan for uplifting mankind. The series was another mainstay of the movement, particularly the First Volume, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, which became one of the most popular and widely read Biblical treatises of its day and reached the phenomenal circulation of about four and one-half million in the Pastor's own lifetime.²

These Volumes as well as the numerous booklets, tracts and articles produced by the Pastor were all characterized by an easy-flowing style that contrasted sharply with the complex theological treatises of his day and were well received. The enthusiasts ranged from farmers to businessmen, from prisoners to pastors, and from conscientious objectors to military generals. Despite heavy demands, such as overseeing a growing staff of workers at the Headquarters office in Allegheny, supervising correspondence that some years topped three hundred thousand replies, editing the *Watch Tower* magazine and traveling extensively at home and abroad, he was still able to find time to produce these vast numbers of tracts and other materials.

As early as 1881, an organization was formed for purposes of directing the work and publishing its Bible-oriented materials. This was originally called "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society." In 1884, it was incorporated as a legal entity under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, with Pastor Russell himself writing its charter. Later (in 1896), its name was changed to "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society." This was a non-profit corporation that paid no salaries or stipends. Its stated purpose was "the dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers and other religious documents."³

Eventually, two other organizations were also incorporated: The People's Pulpit Association in 1909 in the state of New York; and the International Bible Students Association (IBSA) in 1914,

in London when the work greatly expanded in England and on the continent. (The designation International Bible Students' Association had previously been adopted as an identifying name in 1910.) These latter organizations did not conflict with the parent corporation, the Watch Tower Society, but were additional legal entities needed to transact business over a wider area.⁴

Some of the leading booklets written by Pastor Russell were: "What Say the Scriptures About Hell?" (1896—three million copies), "What Say the Scriptures About Spiritism?" (1897—500,000 copies), "The Parousia of Our Lord" (1898—300,000 copies), and "The Bible Versus the Evolution Theory" (1898—400,000 copies).⁵ The amazing circulation was achieved by door-to-door distribution and handouts to churchgoers on Sunday mornings by zealous volunteers.

Not to be overlooked in this prolific literary output were the monthly, semi-monthly and quarterly publications of the Society. These were: the *Watch Tower* magazine, a semi-monthly journal of thirty-two pages with no advertising and a circulation that reached about fifty five thousand, which the Pastor edited for thirty-seven years; it was published in English, German, French, Swedish, Danish-Norwegian and Polish. The "Bible Students Monthly" and "The Peoples Pulpit," both monthlies, consisted of four pages each, with free distribution estimated at fifty million annually. And finally, there was "The Old Theology Quarterly," a little paper of eight pages, with another phenomenal circulation estimated at one hundred million copies annually.⁶

These tracts were printed in some thirty languages and were distributed not only in America but also in Europe, South Africa, Australia and elsewhere.⁷ Few writers in the history of literature have lived to see their work distributed on such a massive scale. Much of this was accomplished in the years 1909 to 1914, as we shall shortly see.

Pastoring the Flock

As the number of Bible Students increased and the monthly circulation of the standard-bearer *Watch Tower* magazine rapidly grew, Bible classes sympathetic to the Pastor's teachings sprang up

all around the United States, especially in the East, South and Middle West. The Pastor made it a practice to schedule some time to fellowship with these groups on a regular basis, giving Bible discourses, answering questions of interest and encouraging them in the faith. Each congregation, or “ecclesia” as it was called (Greek for “church” or “called-out ones”), was patterned after the early church example: completely independent, voting for its own governing body of elders and deacons, yet maintaining close ties to the other churches in the fellowship.

Pastor Russell became deeply endeared to the fellowship as a whole as he tirelessly ministered to their spiritual needs and soon was fondly elected as “Pastor” by hundreds of congregations around the world.⁸ His was truly a labor of love as he traveled regularly by train from city to city to serve the flock. His counsel on a variety of matters, both spiritual and temporal, was also provided by direct correspondence from the Society office, until his burgeoning responsibilities made it necessary to delegate this task to others.

In 1889 a four-story brick structure in Allegheny, Pennsylvania was built which was to serve as the Society’s headquarters for some nineteen years. It was known as the “Bible House,” and had facilities for carrying on the main features of the work, all of which were closely supervised by the Pastor. The building included living quarters and dining room for the enthusiastic staff of workers, and the Pastor was considered the “head” of the house.

A somewhat more elaborate arrangement prevailed at the larger facilities in Brooklyn, New York. This new property was purchased in 1908. A mission building, formerly used by the Plymouth Congregational Church, was obtained and converted into “The Brooklyn Tabernacle,” with offices on the first floor, an auditorium seating eight hundred on the second floor, and shipping department and storage in the basement. The first Bible Student service there took place on January 31, 1909. (Still later, on December 7, 1913, an additional meeting place was opened in New York City, called “The Temple,” where Pastor Russell regularly preached on the first Sunday of every month.)⁹

In the move to Brooklyn, staff workers were housed in a separate four-story brownstone structure which had been the former

parsonage of Henry Ward Beecher. It was named “Bethel,” meaning “House of God.” Meal times for the staff were always turned into devotional services. Breakfast was preceded by congregational singing and prayer, including the “Lord’s Prayer,” in which all the “family” joined. A daily devotional text and commentary was also read, then opened for discussion. During all of the meal sessions, Scriptural questions would be dwelt upon, with the Pastor giving his thoughts at the close. Everyone present felt greatly blessed by these occasions, which took on a special air of sanctity for the “family” members.¹⁰

To further encourage the widely scattered brethren and strengthen the unity of the Bible Students, convention gatherings began to be organized during the 1890s. These proved to be very popular, as capable speakers gave discourses on various Bible topics and the attendees enjoyed a season of rich fellowship together. The Pastor’s presence and his stirring sermons highlighted such occasions, and special talks were arranged to attract and instruct the public.

What was it like to hear the Pastor speak? In the words of one who frequently attended his lectures:

“When on the platform before an audience, he always wore a long black cloak and a white necktie. His voice was not loud, and he would never use a microphone or a loudspeaker, for they had not been invented; yet, somehow his voice always carried to the most distant part of the auditorium. He could hold the attention of a large audience for not just one hour but sometimes two or three hours. He would always begin his lecture with a gentle bow to the audience. While speaking, he did not stand still like a statue, but he was always on the move, gesticulating with his arms and stepping from side to side or from front to back. I never once saw him carry any notes or a manuscript in his hands—only the Bible, which he used very frequently. He spoke from the heart and in a manner that was very convincing.”¹¹

In 1893 the first national assembly was held in Chicago for five days, with an attendance of three hundred sixty. There were prayer

meetings, discourses (an hour and a half in length), sessions devoted to answering Bible questions, and an immersion service in which seventy were baptized. After 1898, both regional and general convention gatherings became more frequent and often were timed to take advantage of lower railroad rates for expositions or special events.

In 1906, attendance at such a gathering reached 1,000 in Asbury Park, New Jersey; 2,000 in Niagara Falls in 1907; 4,500 in Lake Chautauqua, New York, in 1910; and over 3,000 in the nation's capital in Washington, D.C., in 1912. Outside the country, a convention in Toronto, Canada, in 1903 drew 800 brethren and over 1,000 public; Kingston, Jamaica, in 1905 peaked at 800; London, in 1907, about 550; and Glasgow, Scotland, in 1912 numbered about 1,200.¹²

In 1894, another program was initiated to strengthen the movement. Twenty mature associates were sent out on weekends from Pittsburgh to visit nearby congregations, both to edify the brethren and to conduct public meetings. This developed later into a full-time activity known as the “pilgrim work” and proved a valuable asset in maintaining contact with the growing number of Bible classes and to help unify their thinking and beliefs. The “pilgrims” were full-time preachers traveling from one congregation to another, spending a day or two with each group. Their services were greatly appreciated by the brethren at large, who considered it a privilege to entertain them and enjoy their fellowship. The number of such pilgrims increased from just three in 1897, to twenty-five in 1905, to near ninety in 1916.¹³

Growing Public Awareness

Beginning in 1891, due to the growing interest in Europe, it was decided that Pastor Russell should make his first trip abroad. For two months, he and his party toured Ireland, Scotland, Europe, Palestine, part of Russia, Egypt and England. He was greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm for Truth that he found in some places, such as Scandinavia, and especially in England, Ireland and Scotland which he viewed as “fields ready and waiting to be harvested.” But in Russia, Turkey and Italy, he saw little readiness for the message. After his return, the Society began publishing books and

materials in German, French, Swedish, Danish, Polish and Greek. The first overseas branch office was opened in London in 1900, followed by a branch in Germany in 1903 and another in Australia in 1904.¹⁴

Several other foreign trips culminated in 1911-1912 with an historic round-the-world tour to China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, India, the Near East, Greece, Italy, France and England. There were several objectives: to ascertain prevalent social and religious conditions, to evaluate the methods and results of conducting foreign missions by the churches, and to draw international attention to the “Truth movement” and its unique message of the Harvest time. It gave tremendous momentum to yet another effort that had opened up—the syndicated publishing of the Pastor’s weekly sermons in newspapers in the United States, Canada and overseas.

Newspaper Syndication

With the opening of the twentieth century, Pastor Russell and his associates recognized that the daily newspaper had become a potent factor in the everyday life of the civilized world. It was therefore decided to utilize this medium in spreading the new-found Bible Truths, both in this country and abroad. The effort began in 1904, with the Pastor’s weekly sermons being placed in just three city newspapers. Then an extensive, energetic campaign through a specially formed Bible Student syndicate rapidly expanded this ministry to metropolitan centers throughout the country.

By 1911, it was estimated that his sermons were being carried by thirteen hundred newspapers that reached “over ten million readers ... little short of a miracle.”¹⁵ By 1913, these numbers had grown to over two thousand newspapers circulating to fifteen million readers in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, South Africa and Australia—a rather astonishing record.¹⁶

The Pastor commented on “newspaper gospelling,” as it was called, as follows:

“Under God’s providence a great work is being carried on through the newspapers; and the Gospel is being presented to millions who never attend meetings for divine worship. Some of these are discouraged

Christians who lost their faith in human creeds and systems of men and found no footing for their faith in the Bible because they did not understand it. How blessed that God has such an arrangement by which the good tidings may reach those otherwise outside any general opportunity for hearing it!”¹⁷

Thus, more than any other medium, newspapers carried the Pastor’s message to the public at large and provided an awareness of the growing Bible Student movement. An amazing feature of the work was that the papers carried the sermons without any charge; the only expense to the Society was the cost for telegraphing the latest sermons from wherever the Pastor was traveling, to its own syndicate, which in turn telegraphed it to the various newspaper offices in cities around the globe. A publication called *The Continent*, frequently opposed to the Pastor, had this to say about the spread of the work:

“Pastor Russell’s writings are said to have a greater newspaper circulation every week than those of any other living man; greater, doubtless, than the combined circulation of the writings of all the priests and preachers in North America, even than the work of Arthur Brisbane, Norman Hapgood, George Horace Lorimer, Dr. Frank Crane, Frederick Haskins, and a dozen other of the best known editors and syndicate writers put together.”¹⁸

All of this success, however, stirred the wrath of the clergy to no end. Commenting on the irony of his message being favored in this way above that of orthodox Christianity, Pastor Russell confided to the readers of his own journal:

“Divine providence is still favoring the presentation of the Gospel in the public press. The efforts of the enemies of the Gospel of the kingdom to misrepresent our teachings and to prejudice editors and publishers against them have not prevailed. In this also we perceive that He that is for us is mightier than all they that be against us. The day may come when the truth will be crushed to the earth by slander and misrepresentation,

but that day has not come yet. Indeed, in quite a number of instances the editors, although worldly men, have appreciated the situation, despised the unjust principle manifested by some preachers in their opposition, and have given space and prominence to our message.”¹⁹

Reaching Out to Underdeveloped Lands

As Pastor Russell’s ministry expanded, the Lord’s hand was seen in prospering the spread of the message in America and Europe, yet it was largely benefiting the educated classes. But what about the teeming masses of the poor and disadvantaged in other parts of the world? Were they destined to have a part in responding to the “high calling” as well? The answer would soon become evident, as efforts began to be made to extend the outreach.

A clear distinction was made by the Pastor, however, between witnessing the Gospel to the ends of the earth on the one hand, and engaging in missionary efforts to evangelize the world on the other. From earliest childhood, the Pastor had shown a deep interest in reaching the heathen. At the tender age of seven, he had even expressed to his mother his intention of becoming a missionary. But later, through his study of the Word, he discovered that the offer of the “high calling” was not designed for everyone in the present age, but was merely for a select few from various parts of the globe.

Those so chosen were being prepared by trials and testings for a special place in the mediatorial Kingdom. God intended to use them as His ministers to educate the world in general during the Millennial Age. From this standpoint the duty of the hour became clear: It was not to convert and uplift all of heathendom, but to find the special ones God was calling for this higher service of the next age.²⁰

An early inroad of the Truth to the Far East occurred in 1897, when a Baptist missionary encountered Bible Student literature in China. Writing about this discovery in a letter to Pastor Russell, he said he “first read the *Plan of the Ages* in a mule-litter ... and [he] became more and more astonished at the beautiful Bible exegesis it revealed.” He was also thrilled to learn “that God’s purposes regarding the heathen—to give them a gracious and full opportunity to enter into life—were infinitely more grand and beneficent than [he]

had ever dreamed.” He then felt obliged to take a forthright stand for Truth, and in 1898 resigned from both the Baptist Church and his Mission Board.²¹

Far from ending his work, he thereupon began preaching the message to his missionary colleagues. He held about a dozen meetings among missionaries in various places in the Far East and sent out a printed circular letter with some tracts to others in four countries: 1,847 to missionaries in China; 385 to Japan; 72 to Korea; and 20 to Siam. The circular contrasted the teachings of Pastor Russell with the orthodox Christian view, with the objective of sharing the blessings of present Truth and the knowledge of the Kingdom. As was expected, the vast majority of those receiving the circular rejected his appeal, but a few were appreciative. One gave up his orthodox standing and began a new ministry in North China. Finally, the writer also stated that ninety volumes of *Scripture Studies* and thirty-eight pamphlets on *Hell*, *Tabernacle Shadows*, etc. had been placed.²²

The work in India began in 1910, when Divine Providence seemed to open the way. That year, the Pastor sent an American-educated native of India back to his homeland to begin witnessing there on a small scale. The young man was the son of a missionary laboring in India and had been sent to the United States for similar training. But in college he was influenced by the growing school of “higher criticism,” which undermined his faith and caused him to abandon his missionary aspirations.

Nonetheless, the Heavenly Father graciously caused him to hear the Truth message, which he joyfully embraced and for which he showed much zeal and enthusiasm. The Pastor saw in him the very qualities needed to begin the work in India and thus commissioned him for this service, which included limited financial assistance. Thereupon regular reports of his efforts were received by the Pastor, and all rejoiced to hear that the good tidings of the Kingdom were taking hold. It seemed all the more remarkable that this could take place in view of the overwhelming obstacles found in that land—poverty, primitive conditions, heathen worship and lack of education.

By May 1911, it was reported that sixteen congregations were holding meetings regularly in fifty different places in the Travancore District of Southern India. On Sundays at the largest gatherings, over eight hundred brethren were attending. By October 1911, twenty-four native teachers were serving thirty-two congregations.²³ But after the death of Pastor Russell, divisions took place that drastically reduced these numbers.

In addition, some Truth activity began taking place in other far flung areas of the world, including Japan and Africa. The eventual fruits of this labor will be covered in a later section.

End-Time Motivation

One of the most distinctive aspects of Pastor Russell's career was the emphasis he gave to the latter-day prophecies of the Bible and his conviction that the "End Times" had begun. Part Two will spell out some of the details of this belief; here we offer a sketch of the enthusiasm of activity which was stimulated as a result of this conviction.

The single most prominent date in this prophetic outline was the year 1914. For some forty years of his ministry and especially in the Second Volume of his landmark series of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Time is at Hand*, he had expressed the hope that the grand climax of God's dealings with mankind would be realized in that year. Clearly it had caught the attention of those in the movement as well as a considerable number of outsiders who were also watching with interest.

Two special events were expected to occur in 1914: first, the ending of the "Times of the Gentiles" (God's temporary lease of power to the Gentile nations of earth, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of the Jewish Kingdom in 607 B.C.); and second, the completion of the church and the inauguration of Christ's long-promised Millennial Kingdom.²⁴ If these calculations were correct, the Pastor realized that not much time remained to proclaim the Gospel. Much work needed yet to be done to attract those who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus—and to announce the glad tidings of Christ's Kingdom that would soon bring Millennial blessings to earth's teeming millions.

Though these latter expectations did not come to pass, they stimulated an intensive five-year worldwide preaching effort beginning in 1909 that was extraordinary by any measure: “Colporteurs” and other volunteers gave zealously of their time and effort to preach. Millions of copies of a new series of tracts called “Peoples Pulpit,” “Everybody’s Paper,” and “The Bible Students Monthly” were distributed in addition to the usual pamphlets and books. Each month a new message exposed a glaring error of orthodox Christendom and contrasted it with the Scriptural teaching. Also, a “class extension” activity opened up in 1911, which was directed especially toward the public; in that year alone, over twelve thousand public and semi-public lectures were given, mostly by a special group of fifty-eight qualified speakers.²⁵

Reviving Jewish Hopes

Among various prophetic fulfillments that Pastor Russell expected to occur in the unfolding Biblical “End Times” was the return of God’s favor to the Jews. Basing this belief upon scores of Old Testament prophecies, especially in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets, he confidently anticipated the regathering of many Jews to the Holy Land from all the countries in which they had been scattered. He thus urged Jewish people everywhere to heed the writings of their own prophets and to focus their hopes upon returning to the Land of Israel. This view again caused him to stand out from mainline Christianity, which for the most part considered itself to be the inheritor of all the promises made to natural Israel. Their concept concerning Israel, which later came to be known as “replacement theology,” was vigorously opposed by the Pastor.

His attitude toward the Jewish people was truly unique: While fully appreciating that the ultimate salvation of both Jew and Gentile depended upon their acceptance of the Messiah and his redemptive work,²⁶ the Pastor did not actively seek converts from the Jewish community. Instead he counseled them to believe God’s promises that they would be restored as a nation and eventually that the faithful among them would be privileged in the Millennial Kingdom to carry out a leading role as a light and guide to the Gentiles.²⁷

The Pastor freely acknowledged that much of the persecution that had come to the Jews through the centuries had been

perpetrated at the hands of misguided Christians, for which he was deeply sorrowful. Yet he felt that all these difficult experiences would be overruled of God to work a blessing for their race. By driving them out of present satisfactions, these trials would cause the Jewish people to develop a deep longing to return to their homeland—to Israel, the land of promise—where they would be used of God in a special way to help others.²⁸ As preparation for that glorious future role, he urged them to cultivate a love for righteousness and nobility of heart as expressed through the teachings of Messiah and the prophets of old.²⁹

This sympathetic view and message of comfort coming from a prominent Christian pastor were most surprising to the Jewish community, but were received appreciatively.³⁰ These earned for him the title “Christian Zionist,” and prompted invitations to speak before large Jewish audiences at home and abroad. One of the largest such appearances was in 1910 in New York City, where four thousand heard him speak on “Zionism in Prophecy” at the Hippodrome—the city’s finest auditorium at the time. Similar mass meetings directed toward Jewish hearers were held in Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Kansas City and Cincinnati. Others took place in various Jewish centers in Great Britain and on the continent, the largest of these being in London’s Royal Albert Hall, where forty six hundred Jews had gathered.³¹

An interesting item from a 1910 Yiddish newspaper in New York City shows the unusual degree of esteem in which the Pastor was held by Jewish leaders of that day. Just prior to the Hippodrome meeting, a special edition of this paper was sold in newsstands, carrying excerpts of the Pastor’s sympathetic views concerning Jewish hopes and two touching artistic portrayals. The first depicted an aged Jew crouched in a graveyard, representing Israel in its sad and demoralized state, with all her hopes practically dead. The second drawing showed the same Jew looking up in surprise as Pastor Russell appears with an Old Testament scroll in his hand, pointing to the prophecies that speak of God’s returning favor to Israel in the End Times. In the background, the New Jerusalem is seen rising from the ashes, with the warm rays of sun beaming on the city. Clearly it

demonstrated that the Pastor's message had reached the Jews and was widely recognized and appreciated by them.³²

Photo-Drama of Creation

A high point of the intense witnessing activities toward the close of Pastor Russell's career was reached in 1914 with "The Photo-Drama of Creation." This unique state-of-the-art audio-visual production depicted God's Plan of the Ages from earth's creation to its perfection in the thousand-year reign of Christ. It consisted of ninety-six brief studies, masterfully written by the Pastor, covering God's dealings with the patriarchs, world empires, Israel, the early church, the corrupted church, the Reformation and end-of-the-age prophecies, all based on the Bible perspective. It required two full years and the expenditure of three hundred thousand dollars—a small fortune at the time—to complete. Hundreds of colored stereopticon slides were synchronized with phonograph records of voice and music, with the program introduced by a brief sound motion picture—an historic first for a public showing.³³

The main voice narrating the Biblical scenes and prophecies was not that of the Pastor. His voice was impressive in sermons and lectures, but lacked the resonance required for a production of this sort. Hence the services of a professional elocutionist were secured—the then-renowned recording artist, Harry Humphrey. His stirring and reverential voice added a dignified tone to the presentation, with a telling effect upon the audience.

Tremendous research and effort were put into the Drama's preparation. Hundreds of slides had to be produced that were illustrative of the history of the world—past, present and future—as portrayed in the Bible. This required both adapting existing master works of art as well as the production of hundreds of additional paintings and sketches to complete the series. The skills of dozens of artists were utilized in this effort, with the work carried out in Paris, London, New York and Philadelphia. During the years 1914 through 1916, when the showings were in full swing, twenty artists were continually employed just to replace and tint the glass slides that were broken in the heavy usage.³⁴

Pastor Russell provided some interesting insights into the effort:

"God kindly veiled our eyes as respects the amount of labor connected with the Drama. Had we foreknown

the cost of time and money and patience necessary from the start we would never have begun it. But neither did we know in advance the great success that would attend the Drama ... [for] through it nearly eight million people in the United States and Canada have already heard a glorious message from the Word of God (a precious message that they will never forget), also that other hundreds of thousands in other lands are hearing in their own tongues ‘wonderful words of life.’ ...

“The special advantage of the Drama seems to have accrued to a certain class of people whose faith had well-nigh slipped, who were beginning to doubt the Bible and everything connected with the future. Some of these have written us very beautiful and pathetic letters of appreciation and of thanks to God.”³⁵

The Photo-Drama was shown in homes, churches, opera houses and especially in theaters and auditoriums around the world. Due to the extraordinary eight-hour length, the presentation was divided into four two-hour parts, usually shown on four consecutive days. With twenty Drama sets in circulation, showings of one part could be staged in eighty different cities at the same time. This created quite a logistical problem—requiring careful planning, allocation of equipment and personnel, and coordination with transportation services. Audiences at the showings typically varied from a high of four thousand to less than a hundred. The response was overwhelming!³⁶

Before it was over, the presentation spread from the United States to Canada, British West Indies, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Australia and New Zealand. More than ten million persons viewed it and were enabled to do so without any admission charge or collection. Many enthusiastic testimonials of appreciation were received by the Society, and many were moved by its message. In one city where the Drama had been shown, the local paper documented that the following week only one-half the usual number of criminal cases had been recorded, according to the police log.³⁷

Overall, the Photo-Drama was unanimously considered the climax of Pastor Russell's career and, in the words of an admirer at the time, "the most wonderful feature of the Harvest work."³⁸

Summary

At the close of the Pastor's ministry, he had become a prominent figure in the public eye and had made a stunning impact on the religious scene that few men could match. Any attempt to describe his many accomplishments or rate their magnitude necessitates the use of superlatives and statistics that stagger the mind. Consider the following summation as typical:

"As an author he produced six unrivaled books on the Bible whose combined circulation during his life aggregated 10 million copies ... He published ... over 200 tracts, some of which attained a circulation of over 50 million copies ... Before he died his pen products had been published in some forty languages ... His sermons, appearing regularly every week for 13 years, were published part of that time simultaneously in over 2,000 newspapers, having a combined circulation of over 15 million copies ... His Scenario of the 'Photo-Drama of Creation' ... [was shown] in hundreds of cities, and in many countries before over 15 million people ...

"For 22 years he controlled a Lecture Bureau that for several years had a staff of over 300 lecturers. He managed for 30 years a ... [pastoral] work that at times had 1,000 colporteurs in its service. He directed for 25 years a tractarian movement in which at times nearly 10,000 individuals took part ... He was the guiding spirit [and elected Pastor] in over 1,500 churches; and at the headquarters of his work daily presided as the head of the family over his co-laborers who, for years averaging 175 members, lived together as a family."³⁹

Another source highlights the impressive worldwide witness which the Pastor had promoted:

"Brother Russell had made speaking trips to hundreds of cities in the United States and Canada, had

undertaken repeated trips to Europe [12 between 1891 and 1914], had spoken in Panama, Jamaica, and Cuba, as well as in principal cities of the Orient. Tens of thousands of persons had personally heard his stirring Bible discourses and had observed as he publicly answered from the Scriptures questions raised by both friends and foes. Much interest was thus aroused, and thousands of newspapers in America, Europe, South Africa, and Australia regularly published [his] sermons.”⁴⁰

Picking up on the enormous outreach of his newspaper sermons, the Pastor himself summed it up in these words:

“How many millions of readers are thus reached by these papers we know not, nor can we tell how many ... are reading and being influenced. We do know, however, that the whole world is waking up, and that the truths we are presenting are gaining adherents and exerting influence everywhere. We trust the Lord’s name is being glorified thus, and that many of his consecrated people are being ripened for the kingdom.”⁴¹

Endnotes: Chapter 2

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2. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “Biography,” Dec. 1, 1916, p. 5998.
3. *Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* (hereafter cited as *Divine Purpose*), p. 27; *Reprints*, “Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society,” Jan., 1885, p. 707; *Reprints*, “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,” Dec. 15, 1896, p. 2077.
4. *Proclaimers*, p. 229; *Reprints*, “International Bible Students’ Association,” Apr. 1, 1910, p. 4593; *Reprints*, “Editor’s Answers to Interesting Questions,” Dec. 1, 1915, p. 5808.
5. W. M. Wisdom, *The Laodicean Messenger* (hereafter cited as *Wisdom*), p. 106.
6. Wisdom, pp. 106-107.

7. *Proclaimers*, p. 576.
8. *Proclaimers*, p. 54.
9. *Proclaimers*, pp. 54, 59; *Reprints*, “The Opening at Brooklyn,” Mar. 1, 1909, p. 4342; *Reprints*, “Dedication of ‘The Temple’—New York City,” Dec. 1, 1913, p. 5365; *Reprints*, “Brother Russell at The Temple,” Dec. 15, 1915, p. 5820.
10. *Proclaimers*, p. 59; *Wisdom*, pp. 89-91.
11. *Proclaimers*, p. 55 (impressions of the Pastor recalled by Ralph Leffler).
12. James B. Parkinson, *The Bible Student Movement in the Days of C. T. Russell*, L-1, L-3 to L-6; *Pastor Russell’s Convention Discourses* (hereafter cited as *Discourses*), p. 112, Reprint from *James-town Journal*.
13. *Divine Purpose*, p. 34.
14. *Divine Purpose*, p. 32.
15. *Reprints*, “1911 Annual Report,” Dec. 15, 1911, p. 4936.
16. *Reprints*, “1913 Annual Report,” Dec. 15, 1913 (hereafter cited as “1913 Report”), p. 5366.
17. *Reprints*, “Sermons in the Newspapers,” Nov. 1, 1912, p. 5131.
18. *Wisdom*, p. 99; *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly* (hereafter cited as *Overland*), “The Late Pastor Russell,” p. 442.
19. *Reprints*, “1913 Report,” p. 5366.
20. *Reprints*, “Unto the Uttermost Parts of the Earth,” June 15, 1899, pp. 2489-2490.
21. *Reprints*, “Progress of the Truth in China,” with section, “Present Truth in the Far East,” written by Horace A. Randle, May 15, 1900 (hereafter cited as “Truth in China”), pp. 2632-2633.
22. *Reprints*, “Truth in China,” p. 2633.
23. *Reprints*, “‘Good Tidings’ in India,” letter from S. P. Devasahayam, May 1, 1911, p. 4814; “Thirty Million Dollars to Convert the World,” July 1, 1911, pp. 4848-4849; “India Mission,” Oct. 15, 1911, p. 4898.
24. C. T. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 76-79; Author’s Foreword, ix.-xi.
25. *Divine Purpose*, pp. 49-50.

26. *Overland*, "The Divine Program—The Judgment Scene Before the Great White Throne," p. 39; *Reprints*, "Israel's Experiences Typical, Allegorical," Dec. 15, 1914, pp. 5598-5599.
27. *Reprints*, "Home, Sweet Home" (hereafter cited as "Home"), July 15, 1910, p. 4649; *Reprints*, "To the Jew First," Sept. 15, 1912, p. 5101; *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," pp. 65-66, 69-70, 92, 120.
28. *Pastor Russell's Sermons* (hereafter cited as *Sermons*), "Zionism in Prophecy" (hereafter cited as "Zionism"), pp. 481-482.
29. *Overland*, "Jews Not to be Converted to Christianity," p. 154.
30. *Reprints*, "Home," p. 4649; *Sermons*, "Zionism," pp. 475-476.
31. Kenneth W. Rawson, *Bible Students: Early Christian Advocates of Zionism*, pp. 10-15.
32. *Discourses*, "The Mass Jewish Meeting," pp. 134-138; *Reprints*, "Pastor Russell to Address Hebrews," Oct. 15, 1910, pp. 4700-4701.
33. Marley Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 52.
34. *Reprints*, "1914 Annual Report," Dec. 15, 1914 (hereafter cited as "1914 Report"), p. 5591.
35. *Reprints*, "1914 Report," pp. 5591-5592.
36. *Reprints*, "1914 Report," p. 5591.
37. *Reprints*, "1914 Report," p. 5592.
38. *Wisdom*, p. 125.
39. *Wisdom*, pp. 206-207, 210-211.
40. *Proclaimers*, p. 421.
41. *Reprints*, "1913 Report," p. 5366.



The Pastor Preaching in the Brooklyn Tabernacle (1909)

His ministry cheered the hearts of many, but also aroused strong opposition from the established clergy.

3

Opposition of Clergy

AS THE writings of Pastor Russell began to circulate and his ministry expanded, his popularity grew steadily but not without opposition. Despite favor with the general public, his work soon met with vigorous resistance from the clergy. Here was a Christian movement, ostensibly conservative in tone and Bible based, yet at direct odds with many of the creeds and revered traditions of orthodoxy. To the leaders of Christendom, there seemed strong basis for uneasiness and the need for concerted action on their part. Let us now see the causes for their concerns, the remedial steps they adopted and the response of the Pastor.

Church Leaders Alarmed

Over time, the orthodox clergy became noticeably troubled, even alarmed, at the inroads the Pastor was making in the religious world. Relentlessly—both from the platform and in his writings—he hammered away at the clergy for clinging to dogmas which he portrayed as outmoded and corrupted beliefs held over from the darker ages of the past. In 1891 he wrote:

“The masses of the people, as they become informed, are losing faith in the creeds that have so long fettered their thoughts and bound them to the opinions of men who lived in a darker age, and who, however good,

were sadly in error ... The fact of the radical disagreements between the creeds proves that some, if not all of them, have **misinterpreted** the Bible's teachings. How thankful we should be who see the real gospel. How we are lifted out of the perplexity now upon the nominal churches, out of the miry clay of human tradition and given a firm foundation upon the Word of God. Ours is a foundation that is reasonable in itself, as well as supported by every testimony of the Bible—neither of which can be claimed for any of the creeds of Christendom.”¹

Modernist preachers were especially singled out by the Pastor in a stinging denunciation published in the July 1, 1892 issue of his journal:

“In the Protestant pulpits of leading influence in these United States, infidelity (the denial of the **truth of the Scriptures**, and of **the doctrines taught by Christ and the apostles**—Christianity) is fast displacing **faith** (in the Bible as the Word of God, and hence in the doctrines which it sets forth as being of divine revelation).

“This strong statement we are abundantly able to prove by quotations from the public addresses of ministers recognized as the ‘great lights’ of various denominations—men honored with titles such as neither our Lord nor any of the apostles ever owned—Reverend Doctors of Divinity ... men who are recognized as among the best educated in all things pertaining to worldly wisdom; men, consequently, of more than ordinary ability and influence, either for or against the **faith** they have pledged themselves to defend, but which in reality they are doing far more than outward infidels to undermine. ...

“While exposing the infidelity which these ‘great teachers’ are publishing from pulpits dedicated to God, we are far from accusing them of any desire to do evil. On the contrary, we believe them to be conscientious, but so misled by their own and other men’s supposed wisdom that they can now see **nothing** of God in the

Bible, and have therefore come to reverence it merely as an ancient and curious document, a relic of the remote past upon which these, its critics, could improve amazingly. ... They tolerate the Bible only because of what they believe is the **superstitious** reverence of the people for it. And they are seeking quietly and skillfully to remove that superstition ... These 'wise men' are now ... exerting the whole weight of their influence and learning to overthrow entirely the faith of many, their own faith having first perished in their culpable negligence of the prayerful study of the Word and their pride in human philosophies and speculations."²

The wrath and hostility which developed against the Pastor may be attributed to other factors as well. The Bible Students were organized very loosely along lines that patterned the simplicity of the early church. There were no ornate church edifices, no paid ministry, no distinctive garbs or titles for their elders and no collections taken at their meetings. Almost understandably, this prompted a strong reaction from the clergy, which saw its very role and function placed in jeopardy. They wanted no part of this strange and nonconformist religion.

From the start, Pastor Russell was also considered a brash young man who appeared on the scene without recognized theological standing and who almost single-handedly set himself against the basic framework of the established churches. Many interpreted this as an attitude of superiority and disrespect that simply could not be tolerated. For example, when only twenty-five years old in 1877, the Pastor called for a meeting of all the local ministers of Allegheny and Pittsburgh to urge them to restudy the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. About a third of those invited came, and he tried to prove to them from the prophecies that the Lord had already returned invisibly and was beginning to take charge of world affairs, preparatory to establishing his Kingdom on earth. Not one of the assembled clergy was convinced of this interpretation.³

Later, to highlight the differences between his own beliefs and those of the established churches, the Pastor from 1892 onward ran a special series of Bible studies in the *Watch Tower* magazine that utilized the standard "International Sunday School Lessons." These

were selected Bible verses and lesson outlines published annually by an international Protestant church committee, which he used as a basis of comparison to his own emerging views—“from the Lord’s table,” as he expressed it.⁴ These unfoldings of religious belief, though coming from his pen, were considered by his followers as emanating from the Lord at the due time for their revelation. All that was needed was a ready and faithful servant to dispense the spiritual nourishment to the household of faith, and they were convinced he had been called to act in this capacity.

Another cause of annoyance, even jealousy, among the clergy was the fact that the Pastor was able to achieve a prominent place in the public eye as an independent preacher, without any of the customary titles or rankings conferred by the elite representatives of Christendom. The Evangelical Alliance, to which most Protestant churches belonged, was acting as a kind of “preachers’ union” that formally sanctioned ordination of all orthodox ministers. But the Pastor’s Bible Students were not members of the Alliance, nor was he a graduate of any recognized theological school. Hence, he was held up to ridicule and contempt for conducting a ministry without the proper credentials.⁵

Pastor Russell also unabashedly made use of some very unorthodox methods of promulgating his teachings, which proved very effective in drawing adherents from other churches. His Watch Tower organization was capable of producing millions of tracts that were routinely distributed from door to door in communities across the land by his zealous followers, as well as given directly to parishioners as they were leaving their churches on Sundays. Additionally, on occasion the Pastor was able to secure the cooperation of large city newspapers in distributing his tracts along with their papers. His organization was also able to provide “withdrawal letters” on official Watch Tower stationery to simplify his followers leaving their former churches.⁶

Yet another point of contention that stirred the clergy was the Pastor’s attitude toward world missions and the general effort to convert the heathen. Contrary to the prevailing view, he understood that the mission of the true church as a light-bearer to the world was to be in the role of witnessing, not converting. He believed the

followers of Christ at the present time were to bear the Gospel message—the good news of the Kingdom—to the uttermost parts of the earth for the purpose of calling out a “Little Flock” of believers. The work of converting the masses of humanity was reserved for the Kingdom Age and would be accomplished by Christ and his glorified church under the favorable influences of the Mediatorial Reign.

In 1911, at a convention of Bible Students, the Pastor and six prominent members of his organization were selected as a special committee to embark on a world tour later that year and into 1912. Their specific purpose was to investigate the effectiveness of the missionary efforts of the churches. To no one’s surprise, they found the greater part of the world remained in gross spiritual darkness and in utter ignorance of the only name under heaven by which any might be saved. Hence, they surmised that the worldwide evangelization efforts of the churches, while somewhat helpful from a humanitarian aspect, were a dismal failure in advancing Christian beliefs.⁷

Pastor Russell had already clarified his own position in respect to Christian missionary work in a succinct statement in 1911, as follows:

“Let no one misunderstand us as being opposed to Christian missions. Nothing would please us more than to know of true Christian missions both in civilized and uncivilized lands. But since these missions have un-Christian and un-Biblical creeds and doctrines, we oppose that feature.

“[He favored instead] missions of civilization, which would undertake to truthfully instruct the heathen along lines of moral living, to provide them hospitals and schools ... [rather than] missions whose creeds and doctrines slander and misrepresent God and his Word! To the extent that missions are doing such a humanitarian work they are doing good. To the extent that they are sowing doctrinal error they are harmful.”⁸

In introducing the report of the select committee investigating world missions, the Pastor wrote:

“The Bible teaches that nothing short of Messiah’s Kingdom in power and great glory can scatter the thick religious darkness in the world ... Hence, while sympathetic with all good works, [Bible] Students are not expecting the world’s conversion as the result of Missionary effort, and are not disappointed that the eighteen centuries of the preaching of the Gospel has not brought such a result ... The preaching of the Gospel in all the world has been eminently proper, not with the expectation of converting the world, but, as the Master said, to give a witness to all the world, and to gather an elect few from all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues for membership in his bride class—to sit with him in his throne during the thousand years, cooperating in the work of uplifting the race as a whole.”⁹

Needless to say, here was but further evidence to the clergy that the Pastor again had overstepped his bounds and was taking upon himself the role of judging the missionary efforts of the whole of Christendom. Not only did he view these as utter failures, but also that they were the inevitable result of not properly discerning God’s purpose in the present age. In effect, this amounted to a double condemnation of the church systems.

For all of these reasons and more, it was becoming painfully evident to the church leadership that, unless something was done to counter the Pastor’s rising influence, the established churches would suffer irreparable consequences.

Clergy Stirred to Action

In mounting a response to the continual inroads the Pastor was making and to protect their flocks from further encroachment, the denominational ministers resorted to a variety of tactics. The simplest was to use their own pulpits to warn their members directly against listening to him or accepting literature from the Bible Students. The more combative took an active role in local ministerial associations to attack vigorously the beliefs of the Pastor and to categorize him as a false prophet and a corrupter of the historic faith of Christianity.

In some parts of the United States, the most outspoken of his foes went to the extreme of attempting to influence political officials to carry out public burnings of his books. Almost unbelievably, they succeeded in doing so in more places than one: Tampa, Florida; Rock Island, Illinois; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Scranton, Pennsylvania. In a throwback to the days of the Inquisition, these burnings were actually supervised by members of the clergy!¹⁰ Here was another black mark in the unsavory history of religious persecution in America. As is often the case, those participating in these acts did so largely without any understanding of the issues and never bothered to examine the books they were destroying.

Another course of action, starting in 1903, was to challenge the Pastor in public debates in the expectation that these would destroy his influence and expose him as an “ignorant and unlearned man.” Through the urgings of the local ministerial alliance, Dr. E. L. Eaton, minister of the North Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, extended an invitation to Pastor Russell to join him in a series of debates that would highlight the differences in their understanding of basic Christian beliefs. Dr. Eaton was well known for his skills in Biblical argumentation, and it was thought he would have little trouble in putting the Pastor in his place and establishing the errors of his views. The debates were scheduled for Pittsburgh’s prestigious Carnegie Hall on six days in October and November of 1903 and drew record audiences.¹¹ It quickly became evident that the Pastor was an able Bible scholar in his own right and was quite competent to hold his own, even in a forum that was new to him.

Some of the topics discussed were: “Is salvation limited to this life with no probation after death?” (Dr. Eaton affirmed.) “Are the souls of the dead unconscious and their bodies lying peacefully in the grave?” (Bro. Russell affirmed.) “Is the main object of both the Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium to bring blessings to all the families of the earth?” (Dr. Eaton denied.) And at the final meeting, “Is the Divine penalty for incorrigible sinners eternal suffering in Hell-fire?” (Pastor Russell vigorously denied.)

Throughout the debates, Dr. Eaton was always accompanied on the platform by a number of other prominent clergymen of the

city, who provided moral support and coached him by passing him notes. By way of contrast, the Pastor stood his ground all alone—which prompted a humorous cartoon in a subsequent publication picturing him as the modern counterpart of Daniel in the lion’s den. All of the debates were featured by the local newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, which published both sides without any bias, calling it “The Great Religious Debate.” Since all the publicity served but to enhance the Pastor’s reputation yet further, the results desired by the clergy were not achieved.¹²

Five years later, in 1908, the Pastor was again challenged to a public debate—by Elder L. S. White of the Disciples of Christ. At the time, this denomination was one of the largest Protestant groups in the South. Again the Pastor accepted the invitation and a series of six debates was held February 23-28 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Elder White planned to culminate the effort in a huge revival for the Disciples of Christ. To insure adequate Bible Student attendance at the debates, Pastor Russell scheduled a regional convention for the same time in Cincinnati. Thus many thousands were attracted to the event.

The local paper, the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, found such a high level of public interest in the “White-Russell debates” that after the first day they carried them in full without any abridgement. It also prepared a *Special Edition* containing not only the debates but also two extra sermons delivered by Pastor Russell. This time around, the Pastor had become expert at debating and many felt he had made a strong showing for the Truth. The fact that only thirty-one people showed up for Elder White’s opening revival was taken as further evidence that the Pastor had been the clear victor.¹³

None of these tactics proved effective in stopping the work of Pastor Russell or in diminishing his influence. It is said that many leading denominations lost “the cream of the crop” to his cause. His message was just too powerful to ignore: The creeds did not adequately portray the God of love of the Bible; the Divine Plan of the Ages was now due to be understood in all its beauty; and there was sound basis for the hope that God’s Millennial Kingdom of blessing was near at hand.

Sensing the failure of their efforts to thwart Pastor Russell's expanding ministry, the clergy increasingly resorted to tactics not becoming to their profession. Ministerial associations cooperating with the Evangelical Alliance coordinated the circulation of material to member clergymen even in small towns and rural areas that largely distorted the Pastor's teachings.¹⁴ Perhaps the single most widely circulated treatise of this kind and the most damaging was one written by a Professor W. G. Morehead. It appeared originally about 1890 as an article in the *United Presbyterian*.¹⁵ It set forth in the form of summary statements twelve supposed false doctrines taught by the Pastor and described as "Millennial Dawn."¹⁶ Shortly we will see what the Pastor thought of it.

As the battle with the clergy heated up, the allegations brought against the Pastor enlarged to include vicious personal attacks against him. These questioned not only his qualifications for the ministry but his integrity and moral character as well. The controversy then erupted into the public arena with charges that made sensational headlines. However, as we shall subsequently see, these accusations were grossly lacking in substance and truth. In Part Three we will be looking very closely at these slanderous charges and place them in perspective, so that their true purpose may be clearly seen. But first, let us note how the Pastor responded to some of the earlier opposition tactics and how he went about "defending the faith" against his would-be detractors.

The Pastor's Response

In October of 1916, shortly before his death, Pastor Russell reflected over some of the controversies his ministry had generated in the religious world and in particular over the efforts of the Adversary to multiply false teachings and obstruct the Truth. In his mainstay journal he counseled his followers never to forget their special calling of God as a " 'peculiar people,' separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God." He then continued, "And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the spirit

of the world, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us!”¹⁷

Commenting further on the widespread opposition to his ministry that had developed among the orthodox clergy, the Pastor wrote:

“The Editor is being attacked at present by about one-fourth of all the ministers of the world, simply because we preach the Bible message voiced by the angel at the birth of Jesus: ‘Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto ALL PEOPLE!’ (Luke 2:10,11) [He then explained that this was the message that was lost sight of when the authority of Bishops in the early church superseded that of the Bible and that even the Reformation movement failed to recapture these good tidings.] ...

“Now we have come to a time when ... Higher Criticism has come in and has turned a majority of Christian preachers away from the Bible entirely. But they are still tied to their sects and to the creeds which they no longer believe.

“Meantime, in God’s providence, the Bible has come into the hands of the people ... This seems to be ... a favored time for God’s people to obtain proper knowledge of his Word. With others, the Editor has been greatly blessed in studying the Bible and in making clear to others its true meaning.

“We have been doing this for the past forty years without serious objection, until recent years. The objection now is that the teaching of ourself and our associates of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION is beginning to exercise a world-wide influence. We have Bible Study Helps printed in thirty-two different languages. We have Bible Study Classes in all parts of the earth. This leads some of the ministers to consider our work a menace.”¹⁸

Another irritating factor, as pointed out earlier, was that through his newspaper syndicate the Pastor had the cooperation of nearly two thousand editors who were placing his sermons in the

hands of more than twelve million readers each week. Also, the public was buying and reading his books in various languages to the combined total of eight million copies, something of a record for religious works. The Pastor continued:

“As we ... show the harmony of the Bible’s teaching from Genesis to Revelation, the creeds of the dark ages become unpalatable, nauseating. As some of the best people renounce these creeds, the class of preachers alluded to become bitter. Unable to meet our Scriptural arguments, they indulge in personal abuse and invective, with a view to hindering people from hearing us and from reading our publications. But nevertheless the work goes grandly on, with increasing momentum ... As the people learn the real motives of the attacks which are being made upon us, they have less sympathy for those making the attacks, and are more disposed to investigate our teachings.”¹⁹

Some years earlier, Pastor Russell acknowledged that his writings had encountered strong opposition by capable adversaries, but stated that their efforts had not been successful. He likened the attack of the clergy upon him to those of the Scribes and Pharisees upon Jesus during his ministry. He said his enemies had to resort to “misrepresentation and sophistical trickery” in attempting to counter his “Millennial Dawn” views and cited as an example the previously mentioned tract by Professor W. G. Morehead which had been widely circulated. Nonetheless, he was convinced that “honest children of God are not misled by the Adversary and his agents.”²⁰

AT A CONVENTION GATHERING. Somewhat of a direct confrontation with the clergy occurred in 1912 at the site of a Bible Students’ regional convention in Pertle Springs, Missouri (near Warrensburg). The local ministerial association had challenged the Pastor’s holding a Bible conference there (about a thousand attended for one week) without authorization by any recognized or accredited Christian denomination. Also questioned was the identity of the International Bible Students’ Association and its purpose in holding a large gathering at their site: Did they intend to convert the area to Millennial Dawn beliefs?²¹

Upon learning of the challenge, Pastor Russell preempted his prepared text and in addressing the convention delegates focused on the queries that had been raised. He began by explaining something of the background of his organization and its members:

“The International Bible Students are those Christian people all over the world who are studying God’s Word and desiring to know the real meaning of that Word. We are not attempting to sail under ... any denominational banner ... there is something seriously wrong with nearly all those Christian systems, that they were organized in the dark ages more or less, and ... are all in conflict in their teachings, and more or less they contradict each other ...

“The International Bible Students’ Association ... has been in existence for some thirty years, composed of Christian people out of all denominations and of all nationalities, and in all parts of the world ... Wherever you find them, they would be of one mind and spirit, because they are drawing their inspiration from the Word of God, and not from any human creeds of the past ... If we believe Jesus and the Apostles spoke by inspiration, why take what some one spoke in the fifteenth, twelfth or fifth century? Why not go back to the fountain head and get it pure from the great founder, through whom God said the streams of Truth should come to all hungering for the water and bread of life? ...

“The International Bible Students’ Association is chartered and I am very much surprised to know that your ministerial association ... has never before heard of [it]. It is known all over the world, and there are millions and millions of pages of literature distributed all over the world, published in ... different languages ... It is very strange that your ministerial association has not had more knowledge than this, and that they should think we are intruding upon them or to give the impression that we are laboring under their auspices. Nothing [could be] further from the facts of the case ... We meet

here under the auspices of our God and Father, and Lord Jesus Christ, and with the full commission of the Divine Word of God, with the full authority of the Constitution of the United States, and with the full chartered right of the International Bible Students' Association ...

“So then, dear friends, this convention has met here to worship God ... [and] because we are seeking to make our calling and election sure. We did not come here to convert Pertle Springs or Warrensburg, and, I venture to say that the people of Warrensburg have not been improperly urged or bored. However, I am sure all the dear friends will be glad to give freely what they have received freely, and which has brought such a blessing to our hearts.”²²

He next referred to Professor Morehead's treatise which characterized Millennial Dawn teachings as false and heretical. This tract had been circulated widely through efforts of the clergy and had been alluded to by the local ministerial association. There were twelve doctrinal points singled out in the attack, covering mainly the nature, divinity, work and resurrection of Christ, and certain prophetic date settings. The Pastor said the tract was written in such a way as to misrepresent his true teachings, making them appear unreasonable to the reader. The Professor's purpose, he said, “was simply to prejudice the people so they would not get [his] books. That is an old trick.”²³

In regard to Christ—his relationship to the Father, prehuman existence, earthly ministry, atoning sacrifice and high exaltation—the Pastor had devoted an entire book (Volume 5) to explain in depth the Bible's teachings in this area. Other books (Volumes 2 and 3) dealt in detail with prophetic time features of the Plan of God, with extensive supporting Scriptures. Six volumes in all treated these and many other Biblical subjects in the Pastor's landmark series, *Studies in the Scriptures*. It was not the Professor's object to encourage the people to read these Bible study helps, however, but just the reverse. “Professor Morehead cannot [refute] them,” said the Pastor, “because they are thoroughly Scriptural, and he does not want the people to read [them] because they are Scriptural, and

they would be converted if they did.”²⁴ The Pastor then went on to rebut briefly the twelve allegations which the Professor had made.

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION. In 1913, the Pastor put out a special issue of the “Bible Students Monthly,” designed to answer charges being made against him. It carried the headline, “A Clerical Conspiracy to Injure Pastor Russell,” with the following subheadings:

- ◆ “Clerics Fear That the Pastor’s Clear and Convincing Presentations of God’s Word Will Discredit Them as Blind Leaders of the Blind Into the Ditch of Confusion and Unbelief—Matt. 23:13.”
- ◆ “Their Desperate Tactics Duplicate Those of the D.D.’s of Jesus’ Day, Who Incited the People to Cry, Crucify Him!”
- ◆ “Modern Burning at the Stake Is Done in Churches Dedicated to God’s Worship and Instruction in Justice and Love, and is Termed ‘Roasting’.”²⁵

An accompanying explanation read in part:

“It is time that the people know the facts, and hence this statement. This issue of *The Bible Students Monthly* is, however, reserved for use only in places where the preachers make preconcerted attacks on the Pastor. This is not a retaliation, not an attack on the **personality** of any one, but a showing of the **clear facts** as in contrast with the dark slanders of the Pastor’s opponents.”²⁶

The leaflet further stated:

“A systematic attack is being made on Pastor Russell through the religious(?) press as well as in the secular. All the clergy have been urged to join the conspiracy ... the campaign of lying and slander. [Some] more noble have refused, after the manner of Gamaliel, saying, ‘If this thing be of God ye cannot overthrow it! Take heed lest ye be found fighting against God!’ — Acts 5:34-39 ...

“In none of his sermons or writings has Pastor Russell ever made a personal attack upon preachers or others. He remembers and obeys the command of the Bible, ‘Speak evil of no man.’ Even under the attacks of slander and misrepresentation he has never returned evil for evil, nor railing for raillery. He has set a noble example for all, in preaching the Word of God fearlessly, courageously, even when he knew from experience that it would be met, not by logic or reason or Bible truths, but by **poisoned ‘arrows’** of slander as the Bible forewarned.—Psa. 64:3.

“Pastor Russell does indeed attack errors of doctrine, unsparingly, though in kindly terms. This is the crime for which he is being ‘roasted.’ His attacks are so forceful, so logical, that they carry conviction; therefore he is feared and his words misrepresented, to keep Christian people who are really hungering and thirsting for Truth from reading the Pastor’s writings. But if it be a crime to refute and denounce Errors, Pastor Russell has the good company of his Redeemer and the Apostles, and of all reformers. He is backed by the Lord’s Word.”²⁷

Debating Reevaluated

Finally, it is of interest to note the Pastor’s analysis of the use of the debating method in presenting and defending the Truth of the Scriptures. In 1915, well after the last of his own debates and at a time when other prominent Bible Students were participating in similar efforts, he had taken a dim view of them and felt moved to set forth a caution to his followers:

“Although the Lord’s providence did seem to open up the way for the ‘Eaton-Russell Debate’ and later, for the ‘White-Russell Debate,’ and through these Debates led the way on to the publication of the Sermons in hundreds of newspapers throughout the world, nevertheless the Editor is not and never was, much of a believer in the advantages of debating ... On the surface,

it might at first appear as though a debate would be an excellent method of presenting the Truth to the public. Let it not, however, be forgotten that it is also an excellent method of presenting the error ... While it is true that Truth is mighty and will prevail, nevertheless ‘the god of this world’ has blinded the eyes of men for eighteen centuries so thoroughly that remarkably few even yet see the beauty and force of the great divine plan of salvation as presented by Jesus and the Apostles ...

“Debates in general are ... a war of words, the disputants each seeking to undo the other’s arguments and to prove his own. In such a war of words the truth is at a disadvantage. Why? ... Because those who are of the truth are bound by the Golden Rule ... and their presentation of the Truth must be along absolutely fair lines that take in the context and the spirit [of that Rule]. On the other hand, our opponents seem to have no restrictions nor restraints ... Thus our opponents always have the advantage, not because they are intellectually brighter, but because they can and do use means to bamboozle the minds of the hearers ...

“The Editor ... does not favor debating, believing that it rarely accomplishes good and often arouses anger, malice, bitterness, etc., in both speakers and hearers ... We prefer merely to present the truth as the Lord opens the way [before those who desire to hear it, orally or in print] and to leave the presentation of error and its circulation entirely in the hands of others.”²⁸

Summary

Whereas the ministry of Pastor Russell captured the hearts of many who were seeking Truth and Bible understanding, it also antagonized the established clergy, who viewed his work as a threat to their very existence. Almost unanimously they closed ranks to oppose his work, using every imaginable pretense ranging from portraying him as a false prophet and teacher of unorthodoxy, to charging him with lacking proper credentials and being of low moral character. Yet none of these efforts could prevail in the Pastor's lifetime, nor prevent him from spreading the message of Truth on an ever widening scale throughout America and overseas as well, as already noted.

Endnotes: Chapter 3

1. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), "View From the Tower," July 1891, p. 1307.
2. *Reprints*, "Pulpit Infidelity of Today," July 1, 1892, p. 1417.
3. *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* (hereafter cited as *Divine Purpose*), p. 18.
4. *Divine Purpose*, p. 38.
5. *Divine Purpose*, p. 41; Marley Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 57, quoting from pp. 9-10 of *A Great Battle in the Ecclesiastical Heavens* (a pamphlet authored and published by Joseph Rutherford in 1915, and mentioned briefly in *Reprints*, "Judge Rutherford's Spicy Defense," May 1, 1915, p. 5685).
6. *Divine Purpose*, p. 40; *Reprints*, "The Church of the Living God," Sept. 1 and 15, 1893, pp. 1578-1579.
7. *Reprints*, "The World's Conversion," Apr. 15, 1912 (hereafter cited as "Conversion"), pp. 5007-5008.
8. *Reprints*, "Thirty Million Dollars to Convert the World," July 1, 1911, p. 4849.
9. *Reprints*, "Conversion," p. 5008.
10. *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (hereafter cited as *Proclaimers*), p. 642.

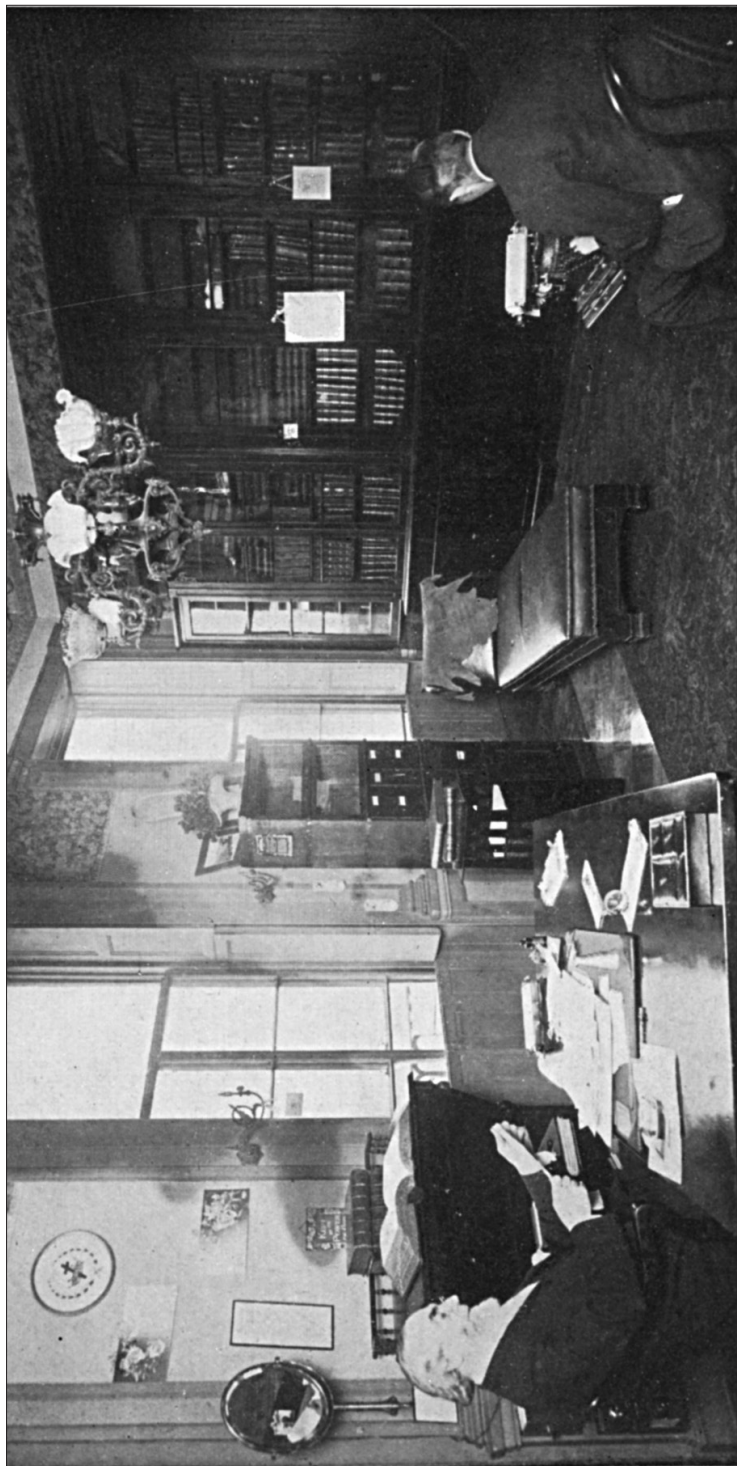
11. *Reprints*, “A Theological Discussion,” Oct. 15, 1903, p. 3258; *Divine Purpose*, p. 41.
12. *Reprints*, “The Debate Reports,” Nov. 1, 1903, pp. 3264-3265; *Divine Purpose*, p. 42.
13. *Reprints*, “Cincinnati Debates and Convention,” Mar. 1, 1908, pp. 4145-4146.
14. *Proclaimers*, pp. 643-644; *Reprints*, “Interesting Letters: Regarding Charges of the Preachers’ Union,” May 15, 1915, pp. 5694-5695.
15. *Reprints*, “No Weapon Formed Against Thee Shall Prosper,” Dec. 1, 1900 (hereafter cited as “No Weapon”), p. 2738.
Note: The name of Professor W. G. Morehead, D.D. is spelled in this article in the *Reprints* and throughout our presentation as Morehead. (In *Pastor Russell’s Convention Discourses* cited later and in various other articles in the *Reprints*, the spelling varies between Morehead and Moorehead.)
16. *Pastor Russell’s Convention Discourses* (hereafter cited as *Discourses*), “Pastor Russell Answers Ministerial Alliance” (hereafter cited as “Ministerial Alliance”), pp. 289-293.
17. *Reprints*, “What We Preach and Teach,” Oct. 15, 1916 (hereafter cited as “What We Preach”), p. 5970.
18. *Reprints*, “What We Preach,” pp. 5970-5971.
19. *Reprints*, “What We Preach,” p. 5971.
20. *Reprints*, “No Weapon,” p. 2738; *Reprints*, “Views From the Watch Tower,” Sept. 15, 1902, p. 3074.
21. *Discourses*, “Ministerial Alliance,” pp. 286-288.
22. *Discourses*, “Ministerial Alliance,” pp. 286-288.
23. *Discourses*, “Ministerial Alliance,” pp. 289-292.
24. *Discourses*, “Ministerial Alliance,” p. 289.
25. *Discourses*, “A Clerical Conspiracy to Injure Pastor Russell” (hereafter cited as “Conspiracy”), p. 351.
26. *Discourses*, “Conspiracy,” p. 352.
27. *Discourses*, “Conspiracy,” p. 351.
28. *Reprints*, “Advantages and Disadvantages of Debates,” May 1, 1915, p. 5685.

PART TWO:

SETTING FORTH DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant,
Whom his lord hath made ruler over his household,
To give them meat in due season?
Blessed is that servant,
Whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”
—Matthew 24:45,46

“Behold, the man clothed with linen,
Which had the [writer’s] inkhorn by his side,
Reported the matter, saying,
I have done as thou hast commanded me.”
—Ezekiel 9:11



The Pastor Dictating in his Brooklyn Office (1909)

The unique Bible Student emphasis emerged through his writings: recapturing lost Bible Truths, challenging creeds of the Dark Ages, and anticipating the nearness of the Millennial Kingdom.

4

Identifying the Bible Students

IN THE aftermath of the bloody French revolution, a new era of liberty and thought began to take hold which was favorable to the development of religious Truth and stimulating to Bible study. A great religious awakening occurred, which was especially strong in the New World. Zealous preachers arose who through renewed Bible study saw the need for reform and for cleansing from defiling errors and misconceptions of the past. Opposition from the established mainline churches forced these to organize new denominations which differed in key doctrinal areas. A common denominator was their emphasis upon the Bible as the supreme authority, and the desire to recapture the simplicity of the faith of the early church in the days of Jesus and the Apostles. It was in this setting that the Bible Student movement, under the leadership of Pastor Russell, was born in the late nineteenth century, as we have already noted.

The Protestant Religious Scene

Before examining in detail the beliefs of Pastor Russell and the Bible Students, it will be helpful to consider briefly the Protestant religious scene in which the Bible Student movement grew and developed. American Protestantism during the twentieth century

could be sketched in terms of three groupings: “fundamentalist,” “neo-orthodox” and “modernist.” Let us see how these differed from each other.

The fundamentalists, gaining strength in the early 1900s, stressed basic doctrines and actually derived their name from five “fundamentals” that were held to be essential to the Christian faith: (1) the inerrancy of the Bible, (2) the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, (3) the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ, (4) the bodily Resurrection of Christ, and (5) the imminent Second Coming of Christ to establish his Kingdom on earth. Closely related to these beliefs were: the Deity of Christ, the sinful nature of man, and Salvation by faith through the grace of God.¹

Neo-orthodox believers were considerably more liberal in their views: They denied the infallibility of Scripture and accepted the principles and methods of the “higher critics” in analyzing the Bible. The Genesis account of creation was regarded as myth and miracles of the Bible were not taken literally. They did, however, agree that man was basically sinful and in need of Divine help to lift him to a higher moral state. Outstanding advocates of this view were Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr, and it found acceptance in a wide cross-section of churches. By the 1930s and 1940s it had become firmly established and by mid-century had become the dominant theological school of thought both in Europe and America. It opposed “humanism on the left and fundamentalism on the right,” largely embraced the “social gospel” and encouraged ecumenism among the churches.²

Modernists, on the other hand, believed that historic Protestant theology (which was largely embraced by both fundamentalism and neo-orthodoxy) was incompatible with modern scientific discovery and advancing religious knowledge. They rejected belief in the Bible “as the inerrant Word of God” and tended to interpret it “in the light of modern-day science and philosophy.” The Bible was thought of as largely allegorical and merely a source of spiritual motivation and insight. Man was regarded as making steady progress upward by his own reasoning and achievements, and was neither sinful by nature nor in need of salvation. This has been termed “the optimistic concept of the perfectibility of man” in

contrast to the Biblical view of “the depravity of man” and his inability to solve his basic problems without the intervention of God.³

In still more recent times, there has been a blurring of the distinctions of both neo-orthodoxy and fundamentalism. Neo-orthodoxy has blended more with the modernist, mainline churches. Many of its adherents are no longer clearly distinguishable, although specific denominations may vary in their range of beliefs and attitudes. The fundamentalists also have broadened out somewhat and may now include other evangelical churches displaying various degrees of conservative belief.

Categorizing the Bible Student Movement

Where do the Bible Students fit into this varied religious spectrum? Paradoxically, it turns out that they are closest to the fundamentalists, though as we shall see they have never been accepted under this banner. Despite numerous areas of agreement and overall conservative views, the teachings of Pastor Russell are considered a serious denial and distortion of “orthodox” beliefs. And this, of course, is what has led to such bitter opposition toward him and his followers.

The Bible Students have properly been categorized as a “very conservative” evangelical Protestant group “of Adventist background,” differing from the larger denominations by its own “distinctive emphases.”⁴ Earlier we described it as a reform group following in the path of a number of similar independent movements born in America during the nineteenth century, all of which dissented in key areas from the mainline churches. As now we begin to analyze the doctrines of its founder, some key points to ponder will be: What did he actually believe and teach? How have these concepts been characterized by his critics? Is his teaching based solidly on the Bible? And finally, does it, as claimed, recapture the faith of the earliest Christians in spirit and in practice?

One difficulty in approaching such a study is the sheer volume of the Pastor’s writings and sermons, which at first may seem overwhelming and defy simple analysis. Yet even a brief glance at the table of contents of the six volumes of his landmark work,

Studies in the Scriptures, reveals a systematic outline of the whole field of Biblical studies and of Christian beliefs, generally in the conservative Protestant tradition. It certainly labels as grossly unfair, utterly false and highly prejudicial such statements as that voiced by an extreme fundamentalist source: “Charles Taze Russell ... was proven [?] to be neither a Christian nor a Bible student.”⁵

One would hope that it would be abundantly evident to any impartial inquirer that the ministry of the Pastor was based upon a sincere, determined effort to pursue fundamental Truth and an unswerving conviction that such was contained only in the Bible. It is also clear that he did not carry on his studies in isolation or confine them to his own judgment and logic. He freely consulted the works of church and secular historians and was open to the writings of respected men of God of his day and the past.⁶ He was thus quite willing to accept sound doctrine as understood and promulgated by others, but only if convinced that such fully squared with the Scriptures and the revealed character of God. As a Bible scholar, he made extensive use of more than thirty different translations as well as the standard Bible helps that had become available: exhaustive analytical concordances and lexicons that clarified the meanings of the Hebrew and Greek texts in which the Bible was originally written.

Concept of the Divine Plan

In 1886, Pastor Russell published his stellar work, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. In it, he suggested that there was “a progression in the divine arrangement, foreknown to our God and orderly.” He considered this to be the only way that the teachings of the Bible could be seen as “both beautiful and harmonious.” He regarded the present period in which sin was permitted as “a dark night to humanity, never to be forgotten” and he foresaw a “glorious day” which would be “ushered in by Messiah, who, as the Sun of Righteousness, [would] arise and shine ... upon all, bringing healing and blessing.” In the end, this would “more than counterbalance the dreadful night of weeping, sighing, pain, sickness and death ... which the ... groaning creation had endured so long.”⁷

He viewed the message of the Bible as necessarily consistent with the noble character of its Divine Author as well as expressing a harmonious theme throughout. He suggested laying aside the con-

fusing and contradictory creeds of the different sects and going directly to the Scriptures to discover their own portrayal of the Divine Plan. To illustrate the extent to which the creeds had produced a spirit of doubt and gloom in the minds of many, he quoted a poem that he found in a Philadelphia journal:

“Life! great mystery! Who shall say
What need hath God of this poor clay?
Formed by his hand with potent skill—
Mind, matter, soul, and stubborn will;
Born but to die: sure destiny—death.
Then where, oh! where this fleeting breath?
Not one of all the countless throng,
Who lived and died and suffered long,
Returns to tell the great design—
That future, which is yours and mine.

“We plead, O God! for some new ray
Of light for guidance on our way;
Based not on faith, but clearer sight,
Dispelling these dark clouds of night;
This doubt, this dread, this trembling fear;
This thought that mars our blessings here.
This restless mind, with bolder sway,
Rejects the dogmas of the day
Taught by jarring sects and schools,
To fetter reason with their rules.

“We seek to know Thee as Thou art—
Our place with Thee—and then the part
We play in this stupendous plan,
Creator Infinite, and man.
Lift up this veil obscuring sight;
Command again: ‘Let there be light!’
Reveal this secret of Thy throne:
We search in darkness the unknown.”⁸

To this touching plea for knowledge of man’s eternal destiny, Pastor Russell penned his own reply in striking parallel verse. What insights could he offer that had eluded the best efforts of so many others? He was convinced that the great mystery of life and death

had been unsealed by God in His written Revelation to man—the Bible—and could be found in no other source. Though necessarily based on faith for the present, the Bible disclosed that the Creator indeed had devised a master Plan of Salvation; that the way to eternal life and the true knowledge of God had been opened up by the work of Messiah and soon would benefit all mankind.⁹ Thus the Divine purpose was no longer a secret to those perceiving its revealment in the harmony and beauty of the Scripture record.

In attempting to comprehend the message of the Bible, one is confronted by a myriad of details and descriptions in the Old and New Testaments alike which can be quite bewildering even to the earnest student. There are narratives, prophecies, parables, promises, warnings and symbolism. There are moral precepts, wise maxims and hard sayings. The Pastor attempted to develop a belief system that would accommodate all of these and relate them to the central theme of Scripture. He wrote:

“One plan, spirit, aim and purpose pervades the entire book. Its opening pages record the creation and fall of man; its closing pages tell of man’s recovery from that fall; and its intervening pages show the successive steps of the plan of God for the accomplishment of this purpose ... [The Bible] is a reasonable, philosophical and harmonious statement of the causes of present evil in the world, its only remedy and the final results as seen by divine wisdom.”¹⁰

Building on this theme, the Pastor went on to outline the highlights of God’s Plan as it had unfolded through the ages. Adam and Eve’s disobedience incurred the sentence of death upon the race; yet a glimmer of hope shone almost immediately when God promised that the “seed” of “the woman” would bruise the “head” of “the serpent.” (Gen. 3:15) Not until later ages, of course, would it be revealed that this seed was the Messiah or anointed one, Jesus the Christ, who would eventually triumph over Satan (symbolized as the serpent) and redeem mankind. God’s dealings with the patriarchs followed, though His purposes in these early times were obscure and not fully understood. This continued to be the case throughout the succeeding Jewish Age during which the details of

God's Plan were hidden in the types and shadows of the Law entrusted to His people, Israel.

From such early revealments that preceded the first advent of Christ, God's gracious designs could be comprehended but dimly. By Jesus' day, the light shone more brightly and the identity of the promised Deliverer and Saviour of the world became clear. Finally it was revealed that the faithful followers of Christ would become "heirs" of his Kingdom and assist him in a work of mediation that would bring reconciliation and blessings to all the families of the earth.

This whole concept of the Divine Plan of the Ages was summarized in visual form on a chart. It was based on the Old Testament prophecy of Habakkuk, chapter 2, wherein the Pastor noted the Lord's instruction to the prophet: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Sensing a yet grander fulfillment at the "end" time, the Pastor felt the need to illustrate God's Plan of Salvation to energize the consecrated to "run" with diligence as they saw the Millennial Day approaching. Consequently, he constructed such a "table," to "make it plain" for all to see, and called it the "Chart of the Ages." It was affixed to the back of Volume One in the *Studies in the Scriptures* series and in later years would become a frequently used logo of the Bible Student movement. To this day, it is considered the single, most effective way of summarizing the basic components of God's Plan and integrating them into one harmonious whole. (Appendix D contains a replica of this Chart and an explanatory Key.)

The Chart pictured in an easy-to-follow format the progression of the ages and dispensations in God's Plan, from Paradise lost to Paradise restored. Organized into past, present and future eras, it depicted the Pre-Flood, Patriarchal, Jewish and Gospel Ages, culminating in the Messianic (Millennial) Age. It also outlined the steps to glory for Jesus and his followers, and traced the destinies of the remaining classes of mankind: the church "nominal," natural Israel and the unbelieving world. There were ten semi-circles to

represent time periods and twenty-four large and small pyramids (or portions thereof) on six different levels to symbolize persons and groups and their attainments in God's sight. The result was a virtual blueprint for illustrating God's program for restoring harmony between heaven and earth—God's purpose in the fullness of times "to reunite all things under one Head, even under the Anointed One." (Eph. 1:10, Wilson's *Diaglott*)

Kingdom Hopes

The main thrust of Pastor Russell's ministry focused on the golden age of prophecy—the promised Millennial Kingdom—which he felt was near at hand. This also was to become perhaps the single most distinguishing feature of Bible Student belief. The Pastor firmly believed and taught that the climax of world history was about to be reached in the cataclysmic establishment of this Kingdom. It would represent Divine intervention in the affairs of men on a vast global scale never before witnessed. His expectations along these lines permeated all of his writings, especially his landmark *Studies in the Scriptures* series, particularly the Third Volume, entitled *Thy Kingdom Come*.¹¹

Whereas the Kingdom theme became closely associated with the Bible Students and the name "Millennial Dawnites" was dubbed on them, the Pastor believed that the desire and need for the Kingdom blessings were intrinsically felt by all God-loving people. In a sermon entitled "The Desire of All Nations" delivered in 1910 at the Lake Chautauqua, New York Convention, he said:

"All agree that the world needs the divine blessing! ... Whether Jew, Mohammedan, Catholic, Free Mason or Protestant, do we not all really desire the one thing? ... Let us now formulate this 'desire of all nations' from those holy Scriptures which we all acknowledge. Let us see that it is exactly what we all have been looking and praying for under different names: It is the Kingdom of God! ... Its rule is to be 'under the whole heavens.' ... (Dan. 7:27). Under its beneficent and uplifting influence the glorious result will be that God's will shall be done on earth as completely as it is now done in heaven. ...

“Sin and ignorance will be done away; ... the knowledge of the glory of God’s character will fill the whole earth. It means a strong government exercised for the restraint of sin ... Notwithstanding the fact that Messiah’s kingdom will be introduced by a period of universal trouble ... which will overthrow civilization ... nevertheless this will eventually lead to the most profound and most enduring peace. In that one great lesson humanity will learn the futility of its own endeavors, and will cry unto the Lord for help and for the desired peace—then ‘the desire of all nations shall come.’ ”¹²

As we shall see, the Pastor understood the Kingdom era to be a grand epoch for both the church and the world. The close followers of Jesus would receive heavenly life and the privilege of reigning with him; and the remainder of mankind would have the opportunity to learn God’s ways and gain life everlasting on earth. This was the all-pervasive theme that dominated his career and was accompanied by a sense of urgency that spilled over to others and motivated them to reset life’s goals.¹³

The sense of immediacy that accompanied his view of the incoming Kingdom became almost a rallying cry that the Pastor believed was deeply rooted in Scripture:

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” “It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, the day [the glorious Millennial day] is at hand.” (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 13:11,12)

“There shall be ... upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ... Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming ... And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh ... And ... know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” (Luke 21:25-31)

Pastor Russell also understood the Bible teaching concerning the Kingdom primarily to depict a completely new social order under heavenly control. It was that for which Jesus had taught his

disciples to pray: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:9, 10) And it was of this Kingdom that the prophet Daniel wrote: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed ... It will crush all [other] kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” (Dan. 2:44, NIV)

The Pastor viewed the Kingdom as consisting of two phases—spiritual and earthly. The spiritual part would be comprised of Christ and his exalted church, functioning as the administrative rulers; the earthly part, the remainder of mankind, subject to God’s righteous laws and governed by the resurrected worthy servants of God who had lived in Old Testament times:¹⁴

“Many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD ... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion [spiritual phase of the kingdom], and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [earthly phase].” “And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning ... [to be made] princes in all the earth.” (Mic. 4:2; Isa. 1:26; Psa. 45:16)

Time and again, the Pastor called attention to the writings of the prophets, who spoke of the Millennial Day and the coming Kingdom on earth in grand and lofty terms. One of its first accomplishments, most welcomed by a strife-weary world, would be to enforce peace among the nations:

“[God] shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” “Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he

burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God.” (Mic. 4:3; Isa. 32:18; Psa. 46:8-10)

The mediatorial reign of Christ would afford instruction in the ways of righteousness and bring man back into harmony with God:

“When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.” “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor ... saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Isa. 26:9; Isa. 29:24; Jer. 31:33,34)

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isa. 25:9)

The blessings of this magnificent time would satisfy man’s most cherished hopes and dreams—goals which had always eluded him during the long nighttime of sin and death. These would include the desire for optimum health, economic security for all, and everlasting life:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” “They shall sit every man under his vine and ... fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.” “In this mountain [kingdom] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow.” (Rev. 21:4; Mic. 4:4; Isa. 25:6)

“They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for ... mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands ... The wolf and the lamb

shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [kingdom], saith the LORD." (Isa. 65:22,25)

And finally, "having accomplished his [Christ's] mission as regards the ... restitution of mankind," the grand climax of this period would be reached:¹⁵

"Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all [opposing] rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15:24-26)

Thus did Pastor Russell visualize the glorious consummation of the Millennial reign of Christ: Mankind was to be restored to the image of the Creator through processes of Restitution and instruction in righteousness. All opposing rule and rebellious forces were to be put down. After allowing one final attempt by Satan to deceive the nations, God would then destroy both the Adversary and all incorrigibles in the second death. (Rev. 20:7-10) In the final picture, not one vestige of sin would remain to mar the beauty and harmony of the new earth.¹⁶

Emphasis on Bible Study

The ministry of the Pastor, as it shed light on these little understood aspects of God's Plan of Salvation, brought hope and comfort to many hearts that had been longing for Truth. But it did more: Such a detailed, comprehensive interpretation of the Bible which he offered appealed not only to the heart of the inquirer but challenged his intellect as well. It called for the believer to exercise his reasoning faculties in response to God's invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together." (Isa. 1:18)

God's people were not to rely upon credulity or accept passively the dogmas and creeds handed down from dim ages of the past. The time had come to reject such muddled traditions and to begin a fresh examination of the written Word of God. This necessitated diligence and concerted effort, in the realization that God's

ways are higher than ours and that an understanding of His revelation would require no less study than the pursuit of any of the sciences or other branches of learning.¹⁷

Modern Bible study called for the introduction of effective study techniques and the use of all the Bible helps that had recently become available, such as exhaustive concordances, lexicons, manuscript readings and new translations. The topical approach to ascertaining Bible Truth was especially emphasized and was, in fact, the method pursued by the Pastor in organizing his landmark *Studies in the Scriptures* series. It entailed bringing together all Bible texts bearing on a given subject and methodically analyzing them in order to achieve overall harmony of thought.¹⁸

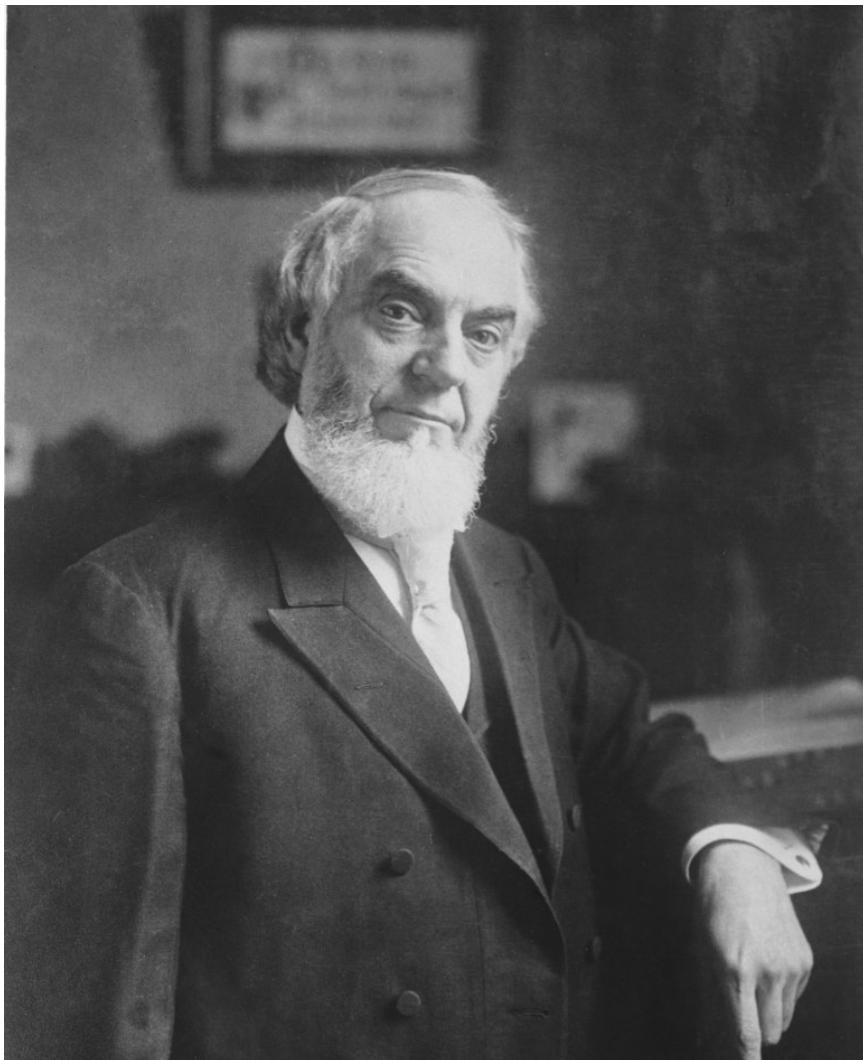
This analysis of Scripture required taking into account such factors as literal versus symbolic applications, type and antitype, word meanings in the original Hebrew and Greek, as well as rightly dividing the Word according to time dispensations. Not until complete harmony of all the Scripture verses from the various books of the Old and New Testaments could be achieved on a given subject, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was the Pastor satisfied that the Divine Truth had indeed been uncovered.

In adopting this comprehensive method of Bible study, Pastor Russell came up with some surprising and even startling results, as next we will see.

Endnotes: Chapter 4

1. Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement* (hereafter cited as Gasper), p. 12.
2. Gasper, Preface vi., pp. 19, 40-41, 43, quoting in part from Arnold S. Nash, editor, in *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 114-115, 117.
3. Gasper, pp. 1, 13.
4. Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, p. 294.
5. Walter R. Martin and Norman H. Klann, *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, p. 41.
6. M. James Penton, a professor of history and religious studies, observes: "Russell was an avid student and began to develop his own doctrinal system based upon a close examination of the Scriptures, various Bible commentaries, and ideas common to much of nineteenth-century American Protestantism ... For example, Russell drew directly on the biblical commentaries of Adam Clarke and Sir Isaac Newton ... Many more of his concepts ... appear to have been obtained directly from George Storrs and Adventism." (*Apocalypse Delayed*, p. 17.)
7. C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (hereafter cited as *Divine Plan*), p. 9.
8. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 18-19.
9. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 19-20.
10. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 56-57.
11. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 19-20.
12. *Pastor Russell's Convention Discourses*, "The Desire of All Nations," July 31, 1910, Lake Chautauqua, New York, pp. 113-114.
13. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 227-228; *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), "Seeking Membership in God's Kingdom," July 1, 1916, pp. 5917-5918; Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 346.
14. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 288-294.
15. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 304-305.

16. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 191-193.
17. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 38-39.
18. *Reprints*, “Good, Better, Best in Bible Study,” July 1, 1916, pp. 5918-5919.



**Newspaper Portrait of the
Pastor (1909)**

His syndicated newspaper columns expounded basic Bible Truth to millions of readers on a regular basis.

5

Fundamental Beliefs

PASTOR Russell acknowledged the Bible's depiction of God as the great First Cause, reigning supreme in Heaven, surrounded by glorious angelic beings ready to carry forward His grand purposes throughout the far-flung regions of the Universe. Further, God saw that it would be good to extend His work of creation to the planet Earth, where the human family was placed amid surroundings of Edenic bliss. Man's early rebellion under Satan's treachery was soon to follow, bringing alienation from God and dire consequences—sin, suffering and death. This deplorable state would have been permanent, had not God devised a Plan of Salvation, which centered in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son.

As a basic outline of God's existence, the creation of man, the tragedy of Eden and God's Plan of redemption, this sketch would find acceptance by all Bible-believing Christians. It is in the details of this framework, however, that the Pastor's interpretation differed from the prevailing view. He contended that the "orthodox" or accepted position derived as much from church dogmas and creeds as it did from Scripture and largely distorted the Bible message. To his mind much of what had evolved into approved church doctrine stemmed from the philosophies of respected theologians who had neglected the Word of God and borrowed many of their ideas from pagan sources. The result was a confusing doctrinal quilt of Truth

and error mixed, misrepresenting the character of God and beclouding His loving purpose to restore and uplift mankind.

Let us see now what clarifications the Pastor proposed as a consequence of laying aside the creeds of the churches and relying exclusively on the Bible teaching. It will be evident that they touch on the most fundamental areas of Christian belief which are of universal interest to all Truth seekers.

Trinity Reexamined

In almost every listing of basic Christian beliefs, the doctrine of the Trinity commands a prominent place. Although it was not formally adopted into church theology until the fourth century, from that time onward it has enjoyed almost unanimous support and is considered a key tenet of orthodoxy. In 1846 the Evangelical Alliance—more than fifty Protestant churches meeting in London—listed it as one of the nine cardinal points of faith. Later, when the World Council of Churches was organized, it also required that members adhere to the Trinity doctrine.

What is meant by belief in the Trinity? The usual concept is that God exists in three distinct persons, called “God the Father,” “God the Son” and “God the Holy Ghost (Spirit).” All three persons are considered coequal and coeternal, yet at the same time unified as one God. The formula most generally adopted to express the Trinity is “three persons in one substance.” This wording attempts to express the idea of the unity or singleness of God as well as account for the distinctions of personality in three separate beings.

The Nicene Creed, drawn up by the Council of Nicea meeting in Turkey in 325 A.D., was the first formally to acknowledge claims of the equality of the Father and the Son and elevated that portion of the doctrine to orthodox status. Later the Council of Constantinople, meeting in 381 A.D., further defined the doctrine and introduced the Holy Ghost as a part of the formula. Finally, the Athanasian or Trinitarian Creed was composed in the fifth century, providing the first elaborate and comprehensive statement of the Trinity, with a warning that “except everyone do keep [it] whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”¹

Against such a formidable backdrop of Christian tradition and belief, Pastor Russell shocked the conservative Christian world by mounting a frontal attack upon the doctrine, beginning in 1881. ² After examining the Bible teaching on the subject and reviewing the controversies that had erupted in the early church over the Trinity, he became convinced that it was a “doctrine of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1). He further believed that it blurred the true nature of God, the relationship to His only begotten Son Christ Jesus and the makeup of the Holy Spirit emanating from them both.

As the Pastor looked back at church history, he found the first Christians entirely devoid of such a belief for three hundred years. Only when the church began to lose its way by heeding the voices of theologians and philosophers more than the pure Word of God, did the doctrine begin to take hold. Concerning the disputations that wrenched the church in that early period, he commented:

“[Some theologians took the position that there were really] three gods, the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit, ‘equal in power and glory.’ Peculiarly enough, after claiming that they were equal, which implies that they are not the same in person, but different persons, the claim was made that they are really **one in person**. Of course, such unscriptural, illogical reasoning cannot support itself, and hence those taking this position were driven to various expedients and subterfuges of argument.

“At times some of them claimed that there are really three Gods in one person, while others claimed that there are really three persons in one God, and not being able to explain either of the nonsensical statements, they have resorted to that word so useful to error and superstition, namely, ‘Mystery,’ ‘Mystery.’ They tell us that the matter of the Trinity is so mysterious that neither they nor anyone need to understand it. If they do not understand it, they indeed should not discuss it; but this should not hinder others who can understand it, and who see most clearly that the entire mystery is of their own making; that the Bible teaching on the

subject is most clear, simple, harmonious and satisfactory.”³

Interestingly, adherents of the doctrine freely admit that it is something beyond reason and that no attempt should be made to understand it with the human intellect. The following is a typical observation:

“A fruitful cause of error in ancient and also modern times is owing to an attempt to explain or illustrate this doctrine, forgetting that it is a mystery to be received on faith, which cannot, from its own nature, be rendered intelligible to man’s intellect.”⁴

Over and over again, the Pastor urged his listeners to cast aside the creeds of men and to confine their search for Truth to the Word of God. He wrote:

“Notice for a moment the great confusion from which we are saved by following the Bible’s own testimony respecting our Lord Jesus and by throwing out the ridiculous nonsense of the dark ages. We are saved from thinking of our God as three beings with only one body or one being with three bodies ... But both are wholly irrational; three are not one and one is not three.

“The oneness between the Father and the Son is explained by our Lord himself. He prayed that his disciples might become one in the same sense that he and the Father were one—surely not that his disciples might become one person, but that they might be one in spirit, in mind, in purpose, as were the Father and himself. See John 17:20-23 ...

“How straightforward and simple and reasonable is the Scriptural presentation compared with human traditions! In what a jumble of contradictions and confusion do they find themselves who say that Jesus and the Father are one God! ... Shall we thus contradict the apostles and prophets and Jesus himself, and ignore reason and common sense, in order to hold to a dogma handed to us from the dark, superstitious past, by a corrupt apostate church? Nay! ‘To the law and to the

testimony! If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.' ...”⁵

Pastor Russell objected strenuously to the Trinitarian formula of three gods in one. He wrote plainly:

“The Lord Jesus is not the second person of a triune God. The word ‘triune’ is unscriptural; so is the thought ... The word ‘trinity’ is not found in the Bible.”⁶

It should also be noted that none of the key words that support the Trinity in the creeds can be found in the Bible either—words such as “God-Man,” “God the Son,” “God the Holy Spirit,” “God of God,” “Light of Light,” “Very God of Very God,” “Begotten, not made,” “Of one substance,” “Coequal,” “Coeternal,” etc. All of these terms are needed to formally express the doctrine, yet all are conspicuously absent in Scripture.

Again, the Pastor wrote:

“The only text in the Bible which seems in any way to suggest a trinity is ... a forgery ... This interpolation forms a part of 1 John 5:7,8. We quote the passage, with the interpolated words enclosed in brackets: ‘For there are three that bear record [in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness in earth], the Spirit and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one.’ ... This passage is pronounced an interpolation by such eminent authorities as Sir Isaac Newton, Benson, Adam Clarke, Horne, Griesbach, Tischendorf and Alford.”⁷

On a matter of such paramount importance as the relationship of the Father and the Son, the Pastor was convinced the Scriptures were abundantly clear. In contrast to the Trinity doctrine, he traced this relationship as follows:

“Jesus called God his Father, and spoke of himself as the Son of God. A father is a life-giver. A son is an offspring, one who receives life from a father. This distinction implies that the father existed first. And so Jesus says of himself, ‘I proceeded forth and came from God.’—John 8:42 ...

“Jesus in his pre-human condition was the Logos, the Word, or message [spokesman], from the Father ... as such he was called a god, but not the God—the Father. On so important a question as the equality of the Father and the Son, we must not rely upon any man’s testimony except that of the inspired writers of the Scriptures ... Let us ask Jesus. He replies, ‘My Father is greater than I’; ‘I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge’; ‘My Father is greater than all’ ...

“Jesus was the first of God’s creatures, the only being directly created by Jehovah; and ... Jehovah did all subsequent creating through the Son. Thus we read that Jesus was ‘the beginning of the creation of God,’ ‘the first-born of every creature,’ ‘the Alpha and the Omega,’ the beginning and the end, the first and the last of the Father’s direct creation. (Rev. 3:14; 22:13; Col. 1:15)”⁸

In regard to the propriety of calling Jesus God, he wrote further:

“Our Lord Jesus ... was a god (Mighty One) before he came into the world; he also was a god from the time he received the begetting of the holy Spirit at Jordan; and he is still a god, set down at the right hand of the Father. But he is not The God, he never was and never will be.

“Note again his own words after his resurrection ... ‘I ascend to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God.’ (John 20:17) Hear what St. Paul says, ‘To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by [or through] whom are all things.’ (1 Cor. 8:6) Again, in referring to Jehovah, the Apostle calls him, ‘God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’—2 Cor. 1:3 ...”⁹

The Pastor also vehemently denied that the Holy Spirit, the reputed third person of the Trinity, was a person at all. He wrote:

“It will be noticed that the Apostle, in speaking of the Father and the Son, refers to them as separate persons, and that he does not refer to the holy Spirit as another God, nor as the third part of God ... The holy Spirit ...

is recognized as the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, representing both Father and Son in the church.

“Nor are we to understand that the holy Spirit is a spirit being—as when we read, ‘God is a spirit’—but that the word used signifies the spirit of a being, the power, influence, will, purpose, strength or whatever proceeds from the person. The holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and from the Son as an influence or power, and this influence or power in the church of consecrated believers operates in turn upon those with whom they mingle. It is always a good and holy spirit or influence, and is thus clearly distinct from the spirit of the world, the disposition of the world ... the spirit of sin, the spirit of anti-Christ, etc.”¹⁰

Pastor Russell further commented on the Holy Spirit and its work by referring to Jesus’ words to his disciples just prior to his departure. (John 16:7-15) Paraphrasing and reflecting on what our Lord said regarding sending the Comforter to them, he wrote:

“The spirit of truth, when it shall come, will guide you into all truth, yet it will be only a channel and not an authority, for it will make known to you various features of the divine plan ... I shall be glorified by this holy Spirit, for it will be my things that will be shown unto you, for all things that the Father hath are mine ...

“Note in this statement the prominence of the Father. All things are of the Father, but the Father hath made the Son joint-heir with him, his associate, and nothing is said to belong to the holy Spirit, because it is merely the divine channel or agency through which communications, blessings, instructions, etc. will be communicated. The holy Spirit is not a person, but the spirit or influence or power of the Almighty God and his everlasting Son, our Lord.”¹¹

Thus the main objections raised by the Pastor against the Trinity concept were: (1) It was unknown in the early church, having been introduced gradually in the first four centuries; (2) It is not

taught in the Bible at all and requires considerable wresting of Scripture to make a case for it; and (3) It is unsupported by reason and cannot be understood by the human intellect, as readily conceded by even its most zealous advocates. Yet there was one more point that he felt was important, since it questioned the actual Christian origin of the belief itself.

It turns out that trinity is a prominent feature of many ancient pagan religions. For thousands of years prior to the coming of Jesus, these religions were practicing the worship of triune gods. Quoting from Abbott and Conant's *Religious Dictionary*, the Pastor wrote:

“Trinity ‘is a very marked feature in Hinduism, and is discernible in Persian, Egyptian, Roman, Japanese and the most ancient Grecian mythologies.’ ”¹²

Scholars are also agreed that the Egyptian trinity concept was an especially strong influence in the development of the Christian doctrine. Will Durant, the popular Catholic historian of our day, wrote: “Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it ... Pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the ideas of a divine trinity ...”¹³

But the harshest indictment of all comes from researcher John Newton. He begins by reviewing the work of a Prof. Sayce (*Gifford Lectures and Hibbert Lectures*) and then follows with his own observations:

“ ‘The indebtedness of Christian theological theory to ancient Egyptian dogma is nowhere more striking than in the doctrine of the Trinity. The very same terms used of it by Christian theologians meet us again in the inscriptions and papyri of Egypt.’ ”

“And now we see some meaning in the strange phrases that have puzzled so many generations in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, such as ‘Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not Made, Being of one Substance with the Father.’ These are all understandable enough if translated into the language of the Solar Trinity [of ancient Egypt], but without this clue to their meaning, they become sheer nonsense or contradictions ...

“The [pagan] trinities had all the prestige of a vast antiquity and universal adoption, and could not be ignored. The Gentile converts therefore eagerly accepted the Trinity compromise, and the church baptized it. Now at length we know its origin.”¹⁴

What a revelation this turns out to be: The major support for the cardinal doctrine of the “Christian” faith comes from Egyptian trinity models! The strange-sounding, unbiblical phrases of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds were plagiarized word for word from the inscriptions of ancient Egypt! This certainly would lend credence to the Pastor’s belief that Trinity is a “doctrine of devils” that has been foisted upon unsuspecting Christians, all in the name of orthodoxy, and accompanied by dire threats to any who reject it.

Christ as Redeemer

At the very heart and core of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Atonement. By this is meant the belief that Jesus Christ carried out the Father’s Plan to redeem mankind and provide the way of salvation from sin by his sacrificial death on the cross. In a once-for-all offering of himself, Christ obtained for all believers in him a complete satisfaction for their sins and opened the way for full reconciliation with God. This is sometimes spoken of as a “Vicarious” Atonement, in that Christ became the sinner’s substitute, taking upon himself the condemnation that properly rested upon the human race for disobedience to God. “For Christ ... hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (1 Pet. 3:18)

In delineating the role of Christ in this process, the orthodox Christian believes passionately that in order for Christ to be a fully effective Saviour, he had to be God. If he were anything less, it would not have been sufficient to do the job:

“Why does Scripture say that Christ’s single death is adequate payment for the sins of all mankind? It is adequate because **Christ is God**. No one less than God could make payment for the sins of all men. God is the One who set the holy standard. Who could fulfill its requirements but God Himself? ... If [Jesus] is less

than God, His work of atonement on the cross for our sins is insufficient.”¹⁵

This thought, that in order to bring about the salvation of all men it would be necessary for Jesus to be God incarnate, evidently originated in the fourth century with Athanasius in a rebuttal to Arius’ belief that Jesus was the created Son of God. Athanasius contended that “the restoration of man [as brought about by Jesus’ atoning sacrifice] could only be accomplished by One who was God.”¹⁶

An extension of such reasoning would be that if Jesus were merely human and not fully God, his sacrifice might avail for one other human but could not be efficacious for the sins of the entire world. Hence, Jesus as less than God could not be our Saviour, and anyone not believing he was God incarnate could not be saved, despite accepting him as the Son of God and Lord of his life.

Nevertheless, what appears as an insurmountable objection to the thought of Jesus as the world’s Redeemer while less than Divine is quickly dissipated in the Bible view of God’s program of redemption. The essence of the matter is in comprehending what the Scriptures term the “Ransom Sacrifice” of Christ and was grasped by Pastor Russell early in his career. He also recognized the comprehensiveness of the “Ransom” doctrine and saw it as the basic Truth that affected every other Bible teaching—as the hub of a wheel from which all the spokes radiated outward. With all hope of future life and the blessings of Restitution in the Kingdom dependent upon this sacrifice, it is evident why the “Ransom” became the core doctrine of the movement.

Let us see first how the Pastor viewed the entire matter of salvation in Christ, then return to the specifics of how Jesus in the flesh was able to provide a substitutionary sacrifice for sin that benefited all mankind. In an article written in 1893 entitled “Redemption in Christ,” he began thus:

“The theme of this lesson is the foundation doctrine of Christianity, which in these days of worldly wisdom is rapidly falling into disrepute. In innumerable ways the enemies of the cross of Christ are twisting and whittling the Scriptures and resorting to every form of subtle sophistry in order to show men how to climb up into

the fold of God in some other than his appointed way. All such are thieves and robbers (John 10:1) seeking to steal away the faith and hope of God's people ...

"[God's] ... plan of salvation requires on our part (1) the acknowledgment of the Bible account of the fall of man, and of his just condemnation to death; (2) our dependence upon the grace of God to rescue us from that condemnation, and (3) faith in his appointed means of doing it, with a grateful, humble acceptance of the favor."¹⁷

Jesus' role in this program of redemption was outlined as follows:

"The simple account, as foretold by the prophets, and as historically related by the apostles, is (1) that the only begotten Son of God, who was with God from the beginning of creation, gave up his former glory and took our human nature; (2) that the object of this was that he might become a substitute, a ransom, for the man Adam (and all his posterity) whose life was forfeited by sin; (3) that he might be raised again by the Father and highly exalted to the divine nature, with all power in heaven and in earth to accomplish the complete deliverance of all those whom he purchased by the sacrifice of his humanity.—John 1:1; Col. 1:15-17; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 11:32; Isa. 53:3-5; Phil. 2:9; Isa. 11:10."¹⁸

In a later article appearing in the *Overland Monthly* journal in 1909, entitled "Redemption From the Curse," the Pastor expanded on this theme:

"Jesus was the world's Redeemer, and the entire process by which he accomplished that work is scripturally styled **redemption**. It includes the satisfaction of Divine Justice as respects original sin and the penalty imposed upon it. It includes also indirectly the Redeemer's work of lifting the redeemed out of their sin and death condition—up, up, up to all that was lost in Eden and to all that was purchased back for them at Calvary by the Redeemer's sacrifice of himself.

“The exactness and particularity of Divine Justice was exemplified in the fact that God could not and would not accept as a redeemer any member of Adam’s race. Even if one of them could have been found willing to sacrifice in behalf of the others he would have been rejected; because, as the Scriptures declare: ‘No man can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.’ (Psa. 49:7)”¹⁹

Yes, because all mankind had inherited Adam’s condemnation, none could offer a sacrifice that would match the perfect life that Adam forfeited. A somber thought, indeed, and an accurate appraisal. But the Pastor continued:

“To human judgment this would have settled the entire matter and marked man’s condition hopeless as respects redemption and a future life. But man’s extremity became God’s opportunity. What man could not do for himself God arranged for him—he provided a Redeemer, ‘The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,’ Jesus Christ the Righteous ...

“Behold the Divine Wisdom which offered this service for humanity to the noblest, the chiefest of all the Heavenly Court!—the Logos, the Beginning of the creation of God! ... With the proposition properly went a promise of reward; and so we read that ‘for the joy that was set before him,’ our Lord Jesus endured the cross, ignored the shame and redeemed us by the sacrifice of himself; ‘wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess.’ Thus did God reward him who was already the beginning of the creation of God, the Logos, making him the Prime Minister of the Celestial Empire, Associate in the Throne and Partaker of his own Divine, immortal nature.”²⁰

Continuing in his account of the role of Christ in carrying out the Father’s Plan of redemption, the Pastor stressed that it was as a man, not as a spirit being and certainly not as God (who is immortal and cannot die), that Jesus offered himself in sacrifice:

“The redemption was not accomplished by the Logos as a spirit being. It was not a spirit being who was to be redeemed, but an earthly being, Adam. Hence the first step of our Lord, the Logos, was the leaving of the riches of the heavenly condition and humbling himself, debasing himself to the lower plane or state of the human nature. But although that was a great stoop, it was not the sacrifice for sin. As the Scriptures declare, it was ‘the **Man** Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.’—1 Tim. 2:6 ...

“[Jesus] was made flesh, ‘came into the world to save sinners’ by the sacrifice of his life, ‘the Just for the unjust.’ He did not make that sacrifice until thirty years old, because it was not a child who had sinned and was to be redeemed, but a man ... For three and a half years he was sacrificing his humanity, which was consecrated to death and reckoned as dead and was ‘dying daily’ ... At Calvary ... as a man, he died once for all and forever ... The work which the Father had given him to do had been performed, and he who had humbled himself to the human condition, ‘even unto death, even the death of the cross,’ was highly exalted and made partaker of the Divine Nature—glory, honor and immortality. He was put to death in the flesh; he was quickened in spirit; he was sown in death an ... [earthly] body, and raised ... a spirit body ... in resurrection glory.”²¹

Coming now to the objection raised earlier in regard to the seeming inability of Jesus as a human to offer the sacrifice that could atone for all humanity, the Pastor weighed in as follows:

“The Apostle writes, ‘Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.’ (1 Cor. 6:19,20) Listen to St. Paul again, ‘He gave himself a **ransom** for all, to be testified in due time.’ (1 Tim. 2:6) There is one feature of the subject seen by remarkably few, even by few Christian Bible students; namely, **how** the one sacrifice of our Lord Jesus could redeem the world of mankind numbering thousands of millions ...

“The Scriptural view of the matter is very simple and very reasonable. Its presentation is that Father Adam alone was placed on trial for life; that he alone failed; that he alone was sentenced to death, and that the payment of Adam’s penalty to Justice would effect not only his release, but also that of all his children, who share in his condemnation—‘born in sin and shapen in iniquity.’ Hence, how beautiful and simple is this Biblical philosophy! How thoroughly it is confirmed by the Apostle’s words, ‘By a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive.’ (1 Cor. 15:21,22) ...”²²

Having identified the one-for-one equivalency in the Ransom concept, the Pastor continued:

“Viewed from this standpoint, God’s method in permitting sin to enter by the one man, and allowing his condemnation to pass upon the entire race, was in order that the sacrifice of one man, ‘holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners,’ should fully satisfy the claims of Justice. What a masterpiece of economy, combined with Justice and Love, is thus brought to our attention! To catch the full force of the matter, we should see that if one hundred, instead of one, had been tried and failed and been condemned to death, Divine Justice must have required a hundred Saviors ...

“Let us behold, then, the Wisdom of God in permitting the entire race to share the condemnation of their father, that they might also share in his redemption through the one Redeemer. No wonder the Apostle, noting these things, inquires, ‘Who hath been God’s counsellor?’ Who suggested to the Almighty such infinitely wise arrangements?”²³

From the Scriptural standpoint, then, there is no validity for requiring Jesus to be God incarnate in order to provide the atoning sacrifice. Actually a spirit being such as an angel, or anyone else other than a perfect human specimen, could not have offered an appropriate sacrifice because it would not qualify as a **ransom**—a

corresponding price to the first man Adam who sinned. Neither more nor less than a perfect human being would represent the exact equivalency that was required.

The definition of the Greek word *antilutron* in the New Testament, translated “ransom” in our common version, bears this out: It is “a corresponding price”²⁴ and “substitutionary ransom,”²⁵ and the root word *lutron* in the Septuagint is “always used to signify equivalence.”²⁶ Clearly then, this is why the Apostle Paul emphasized Jesus’ humanity when he wrote, “the **man** Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom (*antilutron*) for all, to be testified in due time.” (1 Tim. 2:5,6) Jesus’ offering as the second Adam was accepted on behalf of the first man Adam who had sinned and would accrue to all mankind who had inherited that condemnation.

With this perspective, it may be seen how Pastor Russell’s view of Jesus as the created Son of God harmonized completely with the “Ransom” doctrine and Jesus’ role as Redeemer. The Pastor’s rejection of Jesus as the “God-man” did not take away from that role in the slightest, but enhanced it. The Truths that he embraced in this area, defining the relationship of the Father and the Son, did not detract from the position of our Lord Jesus; rather, they gave a proper appreciation of his greatness and humility. He, and he alone, was given that special appointment to carry forward to completion the Plan and purpose of our great God. Surely Jesus’ act of laying down his life as the redemption price for Adam (and all mankind) will be remembered in the annals of history as the grandest exhibition of unselfish love of all time.

An Immortal Soul?

From the very beginning of his ministry, Pastor Russell took a strong stand against the orthodox belief of the nature of the soul of man. His earlier association with Adventist believers had convinced him that the Bible taught what was termed “Conditional Immortality”—that the soul of man was not inherently immortal, and that everlasting life was conditional upon meeting certain essential requirements of faith and obedience to the Divine will. This view was a basic part of the emerging message, along with anti-Trinity and anti-eternal torment components, that would grate against the cornerstone beliefs of orthodoxy in the years to follow.

The Pastor was aware that not only church denominations but also non-Christian religions have unitedly taught that man has an immortal soul that survives the death of the body. But, he asked, is such a view taught in the Bible? Do the Scriptures portray man as possessing an ethereal, undying entity called a “soul”? His answer: An unequivocal “No”!

He contended that man should not be thought of as **having** a soul but that he **is** a soul. That is, man’s entire physical makeup and total identity are spoken of as a living soul, meaning simply a “living being,” without any inherent immortal quality. The Pastor wrote:

“In the Bible, the word ‘soul’ is used to signify being, or person ... [It] signifies **sentient being**; that is, being possessed of powers of sense, sense-perception ... A human being ... is made up of two parts: ... [1] a body and [2] its vitality, otherwise called the spirit of life, or breath of life. The body is not intelligent of itself, neither is vitality intelligent; but when the two are brought together, intelligence, being, or soul, commences.

“So it was with father Adam: the Lord formed his body, but it was not a soul—it was merely so much organized matter ... Next, God ‘breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives’—the vitality common to all living creatures, but not a soul. It was when these two things, **organism** and **vitality**, were properly united that man came into existence, a living, thinking being—‘**man** became—a living soul.’ (Gen. 2:7)”²⁷

On another occasion Pastor Russell explained the matter in a similar vein:

“The center of the mistake on this subject, handed to us from the philosophers of the ‘dark ages,’ is the assumption that the real man is the spirit being, the soul. St. Paul assures us to the contrary of this, saying, ‘The first man was of the earth, earthy.’ [1 Cor. 15:47] ... David declares the same truth, saying ... ‘Thou hast made [man] a little lower than the angels.’ (Psa. 8:4,5) The angels are the lowest in rank on the spirit plane, and man ... was still lower than the angels, in that he was

not a spirit being, but a human, an earthly being—‘of the earth, earthy.’

“The Scriptural proposition is not that God made a body for man out of the dust of the earth and put a spirit man into that body, but that God made man of the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ... and ‘man became a living soul’—an animal or earthly soul. In other words, the entire Adam became a living soul—a living being.”²⁸

In agreement with this concept, the philologist A. S. Yahuda, referring to the expression, “living soul,” contrasts how it was used in ancient Egyptian and Hebrew cultures. He wrote:

“Whereas in Egyptian it has quite a specific meaning, and plays an important role in the destinies of the dead in the nether world, in the Biblical story ‘to become a living soul’ is used only with reference to the earthly life, without any association with after life ...

“It is remarkable that in Egyptian it is never applied to beasts as is the case in Genesis ... The Hebrew expression ‘living soul’ ... can be applied both to men and animals, as it simply means a living being.”²⁹

Pastor Russell also surprised many when he pointed out that the expressions “immortal soul” and “undying soul” are not found in the Bible at all, in neither the Old nor New Testament. Of course, the word “soul” appears very often: The Hebrew word for soul—*nephesh*—occurs 721 times, and the Greek word, *psuche*, 103 times.³⁰ However, wherever the subject of life or death is involved, it is made clear that the soul is subject to death. For example:

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek. 18:4)

“The soul that doeth ... presumptuously ... the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.” (Num. 15:30)

“Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*Gehenna*].” (Matt.10:28)

“Whatsoever soul ... that doeth any work in that ... day [the Day of Atonement], the same soul will I destroy from among his people.” (Lev. 23: 30)

“He hath poured out his soul unto death.” (Isa. 53:12)

“Come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.” (Isa. 55:3)

“He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death.” (James 5:20)

Thus the Pastor was able to show from Scripture that man was mortal in his makeup, subject to death and not by nature immortal; and that when he died, his soul—his real being—perished. But far from attempting to prove that there was no future life for human beings, he stressed just the opposite: There was indeed a strong basis for hope in a future life. This hope, he said, was not founded on the misconceptions of creed or philosophy that centered on belief in an immortal soul, but on the sure Word of God and His promise of a resurrection from the dead. He wrote:

“When we perceive, then, that it is the soul that dies, we perceive also that it is the soul that will need the resurrection from death. Death is the dissolution of the union between organism and vitality, whether it be in man or in beast, in fish or in fowl ... The penalty [the death sentence] was not [merely] against Adam’s **body**, but against Adam himself, the soul, the **ego**, the being, and hence, the sloughing off of the atoms of his body did not pay the penalty. It required the sacrifice of another **soul** to redeem him. Hence, we read that our Lord Jesus made ‘his soul [being] an offering for sin,’ that he ‘poured out his **soul** unto death.’—Isa. 53:10, 12 ...

“Actually, death is an extinction of the soul; but that God, having purposed our redemption from before the foundation of the world, purposed also, as a result of that redemption, the calling of us back to being again in his own due time, by a resurrection of the dead: as it is written, ‘Thou **redeemest** my **life** from **destruction**.’ (Psa. 103:4; 34:22).”³¹

Enlarging on the thought of the promised resurrection, the Pastor continued:

“The great Apostle Paul declares that there shall be a ‘resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.’ [Acts 24:15] The Hebrew Prophet declares, ‘Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.’ [Dan. 12:2] The awakening time will be the morning, as the present is the night-time of sin and darkness. The glorious morning nears, as the night of sorrow and tears passes. There will be a glorious dawn to that great day of a thousand years, whose light is already foregleamed in the wonderful inventions of our time ...”³²

“What then, becomes of the theory that the dead are not dead, or that their resurrection to a higher life took place at the moment of their dying? We answer that these theories have no foundation whatever in Scripture. They are the vaporings of those who have learned in the school of Plato science falsely so-called, and who have not on this subject, at least, been taught of God in the school of Christ. Mark the words of the Apostle Paul on this subject. He did not claim that our Lord arose from the dead the next instant after he expired on the cross, but plainly declared that he ‘rose from the dead **on the third day**.’ ”³³

As he did with the doctrine of the Trinity, Pastor Russell demonstrated that the Immortality of the soul concept was absent from the beliefs of the early church in the days of Jesus and the apostles. For a hundred years thereafter early Christian writers reflected mainly the language of the New Testament and said nothing about, or plainly refuted, the idea that the soul lived on beyond death. Quoting from the research of J. Agar Beet, a Methodist professor in England, he noted:

“ ‘The phrase, **the soul immortal**, so frequent and conspicuous in the writings of Plato, we have not found in pre-Christian literature outside the influence of Greek philosophy; nor have we found it in Christian literature until the latter part of the second century. We have

noticed that all the earliest Christian writers who use this phrase were familiar with the teaching of Plato; that one of them, Tertullian, expressly refers both phrase and doctrine to him; and that the early writers never support this doctrine by appeals to the Bible, but only by arguments similar to those of Plato.

“ ‘We have learnt that by this phrase Plato and the earliest Christian writers who use it asserted the endless and essential permanence of all human souls, and appealed to this doctrine in proof of retribution beyond the grave. But we have failed to find any trace of this doctrine in the Bible. On the other hand, Christ and his apostles teach clearly ... eternal life with God for all who put faith in Christ. The hope of immortality, however, rests in the New Testament, not on the nature of the soul, but on the “promise of life in Christ Jesus.” ’ ”³⁴

Summing it all up, the Pastor wrote:

“Where, then, is human immortality? We answer that there is no human immortality, in the same sense that there is a divine immortality—in the sense that God is death-proof. He alone has immortality in that sense. When we speak of immortality in respect to mankind, we use the word, not in an academic sense, but in a relative way. We mean that death does not end all for Adam and his children—that a future life is arranged for them in divine providence—when, where and how the Bible clearly tells.”³⁵

The Bible Hell

Throughout his ministry, there were many misconceptions of Bible teaching that Pastor Russell sought to clarify. But nothing can compare to the resounding impact on the public conscience that his view on Hell created. From the beginning, the Pastor hammered away at this foremost of the “doctrines of devils,” as he described it—a relic of the Dark Ages that pictured God as a vengeful deity who consigned millions to eternal torment. In lectures given all across the land and in newspaper and magazine articles, he

relentlessly exposed the erroneous idea that the fate of the wicked is unending torture in Hell-fire.

Widespread attention was attracted by one particular lecture entitled “To Hell and Back Again,” and also by an article in the *Overland Monthly* magazine, “Two Escape From Hell—No Torment There!”³⁶ Soon the Pastor was popularly portrayed as “turning the hose on Hell” and quenching its fiery flames. By the close of his ministry, few preachers in mainline Protestantism dared to defend its frightful imagery, with only the fundamentalists clinging to the concept. But this feat only served to bring upon him the anathema of practically the whole of Christianity, as we have already noted.³⁷

Certainly Pastor Russell may be credited as among the first to preach publicly that the Bible Hell was not a place of torment but represented the condition of death, the common grave of all mankind. In 1896 he wrote:

“We find [in the Bible] no such place of everlasting torture as the creeds and hymn-books, and many pulpits, erroneously teach. Yet we have found a ‘hell,’ *sheol*, *hades*, to which all our race were condemned on account of Adam’s sin, and from which all are redeemed by our Lord’s death; and that ‘hell’ is the tomb—the death condition.”³⁸

And later he penned:

“Whoever gets the proper focus will see that all, good and bad, go down to the tomb—to *sheol*, *hades*, called in our Bibles ‘Hell.’ The Scriptures very distinctly tell us that ‘the dead know not anything;’ that ‘their sons come to honor, and they know it not; and to dishonor, and they perceive it not of them.’ Why? Because, as again the Scriptures say, ‘There is neither wisdom nor knowledge, nor device, in *sheol*, whither thou goest’—whither all go. This exactly accords with the divine statements, ‘The wages of sin is death;’ ‘The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ There is not a word in the Bible for the commonly accepted thought that those who die go to Heaven or Purgatory or eternal torment. All these

teachings are found in the various creeds; the Bible alone tells the simple story, reasonable, harmonious.”³⁹

In 1896 the Pastor also published the comprehensive booklet, “What Say the Scriptures About Hell?,” which examined every instance in which the word appeared in the Bible; it reached the amazing circulation of three million copies. In his introduction, he wrote:

“As knowledge increases and superstitions fade, this monstrous view of the divine arrangement and character is losing its force; and thinking people cannot but disbelieve the legend ... Guided by the Lord’s providence to a realization that the Bible has been slandered, as well as its divine Author, and that, rightly understood, it teaches nothing on this subject derogatory to God’s character nor to an intelligent reason, we will attempt to lay bare the Scripture teaching on this subject ...

“Oh! the shame and confusion that will cover the faces of many, even good men, who verily thought that they did God service while propagating this blasphemous doctrine, when they awake in the resurrection, to learn of the love and justice of God, and when they come to know that the Bible does not teach this God-dishonoring, love-extinguishing, truth-beclouding, saint-hindering, sinner-hardening, ‘damnable heresy’ [destructive, untrue doctrine] of eternal torment.—2 Pet. 2:1.”⁴⁰

The Pastor was especially hard on those clergy who blatantly continued to preach Hell-fire and damnation in the face of increasing evidence that the concept was based more on pagan philosophy and classical literature than on the Bible. He wrote:

“Every learned minister knows that the Hebrew word *sheol* really means the grave, the pit, the state of death. Why do they hesitate to tell the people the whole truth on this subject? Why do they translate it part of the time ‘the grave,’ and at other times ‘the underworld?’ Why do they use the translation, ‘the grave’ in one place, and ‘the pit’ in another, and then refuse to translate the

word at all in the third instance, but give the word *sheol*? Was it their intention to confuse the people? What is the motive? We wish that some of these great men would explain.”⁴¹

In his study of Scripture, Pastor Russell uncovered the following facts about *sheol*:

“The word ‘hell’ ... *sheol* in the Hebrew ... does not mean a lake of fire and brimstone, nor anything at all resembling that thought: **not in the slightest degree!** Quite the reverse: instead of a place of blazing fire it is described in the context as a state of ‘darkness’ (Job 10:21); instead of a place where shrieks and groans are heard, it is described in the context as a place of ‘silence’ (Psa. 115:17); instead of representing in any sense pain and suffering, or remorse, the context describes it as a place or condition of forgetfulness. (Psa. 88:11,12). ‘There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the **grave** [*sheol*] whither thou goest.’—Eccles. 9:10.”⁴²

“The Hebrew word *sheol* occurs sixty-five times in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is three times translated **pit**, thirty-one times ... **grave**, and thirty-one times ... **hell**. These are all faulty translations, if measured by the present general use of the words, hell, grave and pit.

“The meaning of ... *sheol* ... is **hidden** or **extinguished**, or **obscure**—the condition or state of death: it is not a place but a condition, and perhaps the word oblivion would more nearly than any other in our language correspond with the word *sheol* ...

“We ... find it clearly stated in the Scriptures that [in] *sheol* ... no tongue ... praises the Lord, neither blasphemes his name; that it is a condition of absolute silence, and in every way an undesirable condition, except that it has attached to it a hope of resurrection ... ‘Souls,’ both good and bad ... go to this condition ... to await the summons of the Life-giver in the morning of the Millennial age.”⁴³

Turning next to the New Testament, he found that the Greek word *hades* (translated Hell) corresponded exactly to the Hebrew word *sheol*, as shown by Peter's using that Greek word to translate the equivalent Hebrew *sheol*; see Acts 2:27. Thus the Pastor reasoned that the same meanings for *sheol* applied also to the Greek *hades* and then proceeded to show how reasonable it was to substitute the thought of "death state" or "the grave" in every instance where the word *hades* (Hell) was found.⁴⁴ How wonderfully this clarified the various expressions of Jesus, Peter and John when they referred to "Hell" by using this term.

A seeming exception to this is in Luke 16:19-31, where after dying, the rich man found himself in the "torment" of "Hell" (*hades*) and the beggar, Lazarus, was in "Abraham's bosom." The Pastor viewed this as a parable, as do many Bible commentators, rather than a literal description of the eternal fate of two men. The rich man illustrated the Nation of Israel, enjoying the riches of God's favor and provisions, while the Gentiles (the beggar) were outsiders. After rejecting Christ, Israel entered the "death state" and a change occurred: God's favor became available to the Gentiles, and Israel suffered with perplexity and bitter experiences in the Diaspora.⁴⁵

But other difficult passages in the New Testament remained to be explained. There were Jesus' words in Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In Matthew 5:22, Jesus spoke of those "in danger of hell fire"; and in Mark 9:43, 44 he spoke of the possibility of being cast "into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." In all these instances it is the Greek word *Gehenna* that is translated "Hell" and referred to as "everlasting fire." Once again, the Pastor found the solution in the meaning of the term. He wrote:

"It is true that Jesus used the words *Gehenna* fire, and that our translators mixed up the English reader by translating this word Hell, the same as *hades*. But as all scholars will admit, Jesus used the word fire here symbolically, just as we use it, to represent destruction.

Thus our newspapers tell about the great conflagration in Europe—not literally fire, but war, causing great destruction.

“So Jesus pointed out that, although He had come to save men from death, and eventually by a resurrection to lift up all who had gone down to *hades*, nevertheless the relief would be only temporary, except to those who would conform to Divine Law. All others under the Second Trial would be condemned as unworthy of everlasting life and would die again. This Second Death would be everlasting, because Christ would not die again for those who would sin wilfully after being released from the first sentence. [Heb. 6:4-6; 7:27]”⁴⁶

In Jesus’ day, his listeners were quite familiar with the practice of burning refuse in the municipal dump. Referring to this fact, the Pastor continued:

“Pointing to the valley outside of Jerusalem, used as a garbage furnace and called in the Greek *Gehenna*, and in Hebrew Valley of Hinnom ... Jesus declared that it illustrated the fate of all wilful sinners. Dead ... [animals] were thrown into the Valley of Hinnom, *Gehenna*, where fires were kept burning, and where brimstone was burned to kill the germs.

“It is said that criminals of the worst type, after execution, were thrown into that valley, as intimating that they would not share in the resurrection. This thought Jesus emphasized—the utter destruction, in the Second Death, of any found incorrigible after having received full opportunity of return to God ... The world in its trial Day future, will be in danger of *Gehenna* destruction—the Second Death ... ‘punished with everlasting destruction.’ (2 Thess. 1:7-9).”⁴⁷

Thus, rather than suffering eternal torment, those who ultimately reject God in the Millennial Kingdom will simply be put out of existence in the all-consuming fire of *Gehenna*, which symbolizes the second death. The Pastor also pointed out that the “Lake of Fire,” graphically portrayed in Revelation chapter 20, is another

symbol of total destruction and annihilation. It will eventually consume even death itself, so that not even the fear of death's inevitability will remain to mar the perfection and sublimity of God's earthly Kingdom in the ages to come. He wrote:

“Bible students know that *sheol* and *hades* could not be places of eternal torture; for the Scriptures say that they shall be destroyed. If *sheol* and *hades* are to be destroyed, how could anybody be tortured there everlastingly? The clergy know these things very well, but hide them from the people. Hosea 13:14 reads, ‘O grave (*sheol*), I will be thy destruction!’ 1 Corinthians 15:55, ‘O grave (*hades*), where is thy victory?’ Revelation 20:14, ‘Death and Hell (*hades*), shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death.’

“These Scriptures mean that the grave shall not always triumph over the human family, that mankind will be delivered by Messiah's Kingdom from the power of the tomb, that we can rely upon God's promise that ultimately *hades*, the tomb, will be destroyed in the Second Death, symbolically represented by the Lake of Fire. Note that the symbol is explained—‘the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death.’ ”⁴⁸

In thus revealing the Truth about Hell, Pastor Russell had the personal satisfaction of defending the great love of God toward His creatures and exposing the error of those who were dishonoring His name. Despite the torrent of opposition and bitterness that his stance evoked from the orthodox clergy, he unflinchingly refused to compromise or diminish his attack. Responding to those critics who charged that the Hell-fire doctrine was necessary as a general restraint upon the people, he wrote:

“If God is love, then he draws his creatures to him solely on the basis of love. He draws no one by fear. To love, the pure in heart respond. Fear can drive even the vilest criminal to obey, for purely selfish preservation. But God does not tolerate the wicked-hearted to gain life. Only those who respond to love gain his favor. There is no point, then, in trying to terrify people

against their heart's desire, into righteousness. Scare religion, based on the eternal-torment teaching, would be the last thing God would resort to, to attract men to Him."⁴⁹

The Pastor believed that all the doctrines of the Bible had to square with the character of its Author and that therefore its teaching on Hell had to be fully in harmony with the Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power of God. As a closing admonition to a consideration of this topic, he wrote:

"May our eyes of understanding open to a true knowledge of God's Word, and to a true appreciation of his glorious character! Then we shall love Him better, and serve Him, not from fear, but as dear children."⁵⁰

Two Distinct Salvations

Rounding out the views of Pastor Russell pertaining to man's fall and redemption, we come to the doctrine of Salvation. All Bible-believing Christians hold to man's basic sinful nature resulting from the fall in Eden and acknowledge his need of God's help to lift him up. Salvation is considered the gift of God for eternal life that comes through faith in Christ as the Redeemer. Although the Pastor was in complete accord with this overall view, he was greatly troubled by the conclusion to which it seemed to lead: that only the believer in Christ will be blessed by a future heavenly life and that all others were hopelessly lost. Some who found this belief too constricting tried to modify it by extending salvation to the masses of mankind who were "not good enough for heaven, but too good for hell," yet were hard pressed to find Bible support for the concept.

The Pastor instinctively realized that something was fundamentally wrong with such views—that they were unreasonable and did not square with the character of God in depicting the Plan of Salvation. Something was lacking and he diligently searched the Scriptures to determine if there were not a more comprehensive and satisfying understanding. And indeed there was!

In a nutshell, the Pastor grasped that the common view of God's Plan of Salvation was much too narrow. Only the election of the church class, with attendant blessings of eternal life in heaven,

was emphasized. But little was understood of the destiny of the remainder of mankind—the vast multitudes who had either never heard of the name of Christ or who had not responded favorably to the message they had heard.

In his own careful Bible study, he began to see that the election of the church was depicted merely as the “first-fruits” unto God, and not by any means “the entire harvest.” Additionally, there were to be the “after-fruits” unto God, who would also be the recipients of His gracious purposes, but on an earthly plane. In fact, The Christ class, consisting of Jesus the head and the church as body members, was portrayed as God’s special instrument to bring blessings to this vast group, spoken of as “all the families of the earth.”⁵¹

Thus seen, there are really two distinct salvations. The call of the church is to a heavenly nature, with spirit bodies, joint-heirship with Jesus in his Kingdom and special responsibilities in helping the remainder of mankind. The other salvation, designed for the world of mankind, is an earthly one, called in the Scriptures “restitution.” It will involve a restoration to that condition of human perfection that existed in Adam and Eve prior to their disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Only a few are called to the heavenly salvation. The teeming masses of humanity will benefit from the earthly salvation.

Enlarging on this theme, the Pastor wrote:

“ ‘The first man was of the earth, earthy.’ It was that earthy man, perfect, in the image of his Creator, for whose happiness Eden was specially prepared. By obedience to God he might have continued to enjoy his Eden home everlastingly. By disobedience he first lost his fellowship with God, then his Eden home, and after ... toiling with thorns and thistles in sweat of face ... he died. Adam’s race, sharing his weaknesses by laws of heredity, have also shared death with him.

“The Scriptures tell us that God’s real purpose in sending Jesus into the world was that ‘the world through him might be saved’—not the salvation of the Church; that was an incidental feature ... We remember the Master’s words to the effect that he ‘came to seek and to save [recover] that which was lost.’—Luke 19:10 ...

“It was a human life, human perfection and an earthly home that were lost. It is these, then, that Jesus proposes in due time to recover for Adam and his family. The Messianic reign of Jesus and his body—The Anointed, The Christ, The Messiah—will be for the purpose of blessing Adam and all of his race with glorious opportunities of an earthly salvation.”⁵²

On another occasion, in touching again on these two distinct salvations in the Plan of God, the Pastor called attention to the time aspects involved. He wrote:

“[The] salvation of man and of his earthly home and future dominion is preceded by another phase, or kind, of salvation. Before dealing with the world, God elects, calls, draws, instructs a saintly class. These by faith may now speak of themselves as saved, although their salvation will not really be accomplished until they share in the first resurrection ... [Then] the saintly ones will ... [experience] a transfer from human nature and conditions to spirit (heavenly) nature and conditions ...”⁵³

Hence, the first to benefit from God’s Salvation program is the church class in the present life. By their faith in Christ and walking in his steps, God justifies them and forgives them of their sins. (Rom. 5:1,2) “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:1) The merit of Christ’s sacrifice has been applied on their behalf and they are able to stand before God and offer acceptable service to Him on the basis of Jesus’ righteousness imputed to them. But this is only the beginning of God’s Salvation Plan. And the church class represents only a minutia of the fallen human creation that needs to be lifted up.

Thus the Pastor continued:

“But the world has not yet been saved. It lies in the Wicked One. Satan is still the ‘prince of this world.’ Sin and death reign. The world has only the divine promise which was given to Abraham ... that eventually all the families of the earth shall be blessed by

Messiah; and that to effect this salvation Messiah in due time will set up a glorious reign of righteousness, the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens.

“It shall rule; it shall conquer; it shall destroy sin, death and everything opposed to divine righteousness and to the best interests of mankind. Thus eventually the knowledge of the Lord shall be made to fill the whole earth (Isa. 11:9), and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the Lord. (Isa. 45:23) Thus shall come the glorious opportunity for [earthly] salvation through the knowledge of the Lord, and his will.—Jer. 31:34”⁵⁴

From this standpoint it may be seen that the entire Millennial Kingdom arrangement was purposed to permit the salvation of the world of mankind. Under favorable conditions of the era, with Satan bound, false gospels exposed, rebellion put down and the blessings of peace and prosperity abounding, man will find himself learning righteousness and being desirous of serving God. Obedience to the Creator’s laws will lead to mental, moral and physical uplift, a goal that has eluded man’s own best efforts through all the centuries—a salvation worthy of being likened to Paradise restored upon the earth.

In addition, this realization that God’s Plan accommodates two distinct salvations provides the key to unlocking a theological issue of no mean proportion: It turns out to be the very concept needed to resolve the perplexing centuries-old conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism.

In discussing these beliefs, the Pastor saw Calvinism as drawing upon the doctrines of predestination and election, and teaching that every member of the human family has been foreordained either to be eternally saved or eternally lost. Since only a tiny minority of earth’s teeming inhabitants, past or present, have ever heard of the only name given under heaven whereby they might be saved, it follows that the vast majority are condemned to indescribable misery for all eternity. The Pastor found this unreasonable, even though recognizing that Calvinism promoted reverence for an all wise and just God.⁵⁵

On the other hand, he saw Arminianism drawing upon the Bible doctrine of free grace and, in theory at least, giving to every member of the race the opportunity to respond to God's loving provisions for them. In this view, that large group which fail to gain the prize and find themselves lost in eternal torment are not so predestinated, even though God is not able to save them from such a fate. Many Christians tend to favor this latter belief, but the Pastor found it sorely wanting as well.⁵⁶

Calvinism and Arminianism each take some of the basic attributes of God into account and find some Scriptural support. Hence, both views are correct in measure, yet both also fall short of capturing the whole picture. In the words of the Pastor:

“The doctrines of election and free grace, as taught by Calvinism and Arminianism, could never be harmonized, with each other, with reason, or with the Bible, yet these two glorious Bible doctrines are perfectly harmonious and beautiful, seen from the standpoint of the plan of the ages.”⁵⁷

How satisfying, then, is the concept of two salvations, which brings these seemingly clashing views into complete accord: Election applies only to the church, conceived in the mind of God from before the foundation of the world, and has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age. (Rom. 8:30,31) Free grace pertains to the Restitution class of mankind and will become available to all the willing and obedient during the Kingdom Age, at the hands of Christ and his church. (Rev. 22:17) ⁵⁸

Thus the Pastor could conclude:

“Now we are beginning to see in the proper image of God not merely the dignity of His Foreknowledge, His Wisdom, His Justice, His Power, but also in Him the Love which so draws our hearts and which calls upon us to bow before Him and adore Him ... His righteous dealings are being made manifest to us, because we are learning gradually that His plan must be considered as a whole ... We are applying in their proper places those promises which belong to the world [and those which belong to the church].”⁵⁹

The New Testament Church

Pastor Russell saw the church described in Scripture as vastly different from the common conception. The term “church” as used in the Bible does not refer to a building or edifice of worship, nor does it describe a particular denomination. It refers instead to the people who have been specially selected and called of God to become followers of Christ and to live separate from the spirit of the world. The word “church” is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “that which is called out.”⁶⁰

This understanding of the true meaning of “church” places the emphasis squarely upon each individual believer and his or her relationship to the Heavenly Father. It is personal faith and devotion that is all important. Does an individual have full trust in Jesus as his Saviour? Is he fully consecrated to God and His service? Is he seeking to grow in the fruits and graces of the Spirit and further his knowledge of God? And is he standing up for these beliefs in his daily life and witnessing for the Gospel? If so, he or she surely would be a part of the true church, of the whole “assembly and church of the firstborn,” whose names “are written in heaven.” (Heb. 12:23)

In thus depicting membership in the true church, the Pastor saw no need for a priestly or clergy class in authority over their fellows. In this, he largely reflected the teaching of Martin Luther in his concept of “the priesthood of all believers,” which considered each member of the congregation as being equally important. Both men believed that the distinction between clergy and laity, so common in the established churches for centuries, was entirely improper and unscriptural.⁶¹ Jesus’ words on this were authoritative and clear:

“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” (Matt. 23:8) “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

In comparing the model of the early church to the present day, the Pastor saw no reason why the simple organization that prevailed then would not be sufficient now. Accordingly, he advised that individual congregations be established in the various cities patterned after this example. Each body of believers was to be autonomous and elect elders and deacons for positions of service within their

respective groups, called “ecclesias” or “classes.” Cooperative efforts between these congregations, especially in spreading the Gospel to others, were encouraged; but no overriding authority was recognized to supervise these efforts or to exercise control over the individual classes.⁶²

Commenting on the proper order to be found in Bible Student classes, the Pastor wrote:

“We have no hesitation in commending to the churches in every place, whether their numbers be large or small, the Apostle’s counsel, that, in each company, elders be chosen from among their number to ‘feed’ and ‘take the oversight’ of the flock. And in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle (1 Cor. 12:28,29), that God hath set some in the church to be special helpers, teachers, etc. ... we should expect that the Lord will provide some such in every company [of believers] ...”⁶³

He saw a twofold purpose in establishing such congregations in the local community:

“The special field of labor for each company is their own locality, as far as they can extend their influence; and fervent piety and burning zeal among them will not be fruitless. If but little wheat can be garnered, abundant **testimony to the truth** can at least be borne. This gospel of the kingdom is to be preached ‘for a **witness**,’ as well as for the gathering out of ‘a people for his name.’”⁶⁴

Worship activities within the congregation were varied, to strengthen each other in the faith and to grow in knowledge and grace. Bible studies and discourses predominated on Sundays, whereas praise and testimony meetings and additional Bible studies were more common during the week. Individual participation in these group studies was encouraged, along the lines of seminar meetings, to foster interaction and personal growth. The arrangement was quite democratic and frequently promoted enthusiastic discussion and questions, under the direction of the study leader.⁶⁵

Convention gatherings that brought together various ecclesias and Bible Students from other states were encouraged. For days or a

week at a time the brethren would worship, study and pray together, and listen to Bible discourses for mutual edification and growth. The warmth and depth of Christian fellowship was always a strong feature of these gatherings, which remain popular to this day.

The Permission of Evil

No more perplexing question has crossed the inquiring mind than why God permits evil in this world—the various calamities and sorrows that afflict the human race. A man of faith can appreciate the Bible’s portrayal of God as holy and righteous and possessing wisdom that would permit only the best for His human creation, but this merely begs the question. The Pastor saw the answer in the realization that experience is indeed the best teacher.

He reasoned that God foresaw that man would fall into sin and that through lack of experience he would eventually accept and even choose evil as a way of life. It was necessary, therefore, to permit such a meaningful “hands-on” contact with the results of disobeying God that would extend over many generations and impress itself upon the human conscience. Then, when restored to life in the Kingdom, man could profit from it as a valuable educational lesson enduring through all the ages of eternity. He wrote:

“God designed to **permit evil**, because, having the remedy [Christ’s atoning sacrifice] provided for man’s release from its consequences, he saw that the result would be to lead him, through experience, to a full appreciation of ‘the exceeding sinfulness of sin’ and of the matchless brilliancy of virtue in contrast with it. [This would teach man] the more to love and honor his Creator, who is the source and fountain of all goodness, and forever to shun that which brought so much woe and misery.”⁶⁶

Mystery of the Anointed

The Bible repeatedly reveals God’s purpose to restore and bless mankind through a coming deliverer. But the identity of that deliverer remained obscure and a mystery for four thousand years until Jesus appeared on the scene. It was then, the Pastor wrote, that the Apostle Paul could declare that “this mystery which hath been

hid from ages and from generations, now made manifest to his saints, is ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory.’ ” (Col. 1:27) ⁶⁷

The Pastor then went on to ask:

“But what is meant by ‘Christ in you’? ... Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit ... and thus we recognize him to be the Christ—the anointed—for the word **Christ** signifies **anointed** ... The saints of this Gospel age are [also] an anointed company—anointed to be kings and priests unto God (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:9); and together with Jesus, their chief and Lord, they constitute Jehovah’s Anointed—the Christ.

“In harmony with [the] teaching of John [1 John 2:27], that we also are **anointed**, Paul assures us that this mystery which has been kept secret in ages past, but which is now made known to the saints, is that **the Christ** (the Anointed) is ‘not one member, but many,’ just as the human body is one, and has many members; but as all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Anointed—the Christ. (1 Cor. 12:12-28) ... Unitedly they constitute the **promised ‘Seed’**—the Great Deliverer: ‘If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s **seed**, and **heirs** according to the promise.’ (Gal. 3:29)” ⁶⁸

Hence the Pastor understood the deliverer would be a class composed of many members—Jesus and his glorified saints. This would be the result of “the ‘**high calling**’ to which the consecrated believers of the Gospel age are privileged to attain.” It is the dawning of Millennial Day that brings the unveiling of this great mystery. “The Sun of Righteousness” that “shall arise with healing in his wings” is in reality “the Christ in Millennial glory—not the Head alone, but also the members of his body.” (Col. 3:4; Matt. 13:43) ⁶⁹

The Judgment Day

In expressing himself on this subject, Pastor Russell again broke sharply with tradition. He saw the Judgment Day of the Bible as an epoch or period of time that was actually the same as the thousand-year day of the Kingdom and Millennial reign of Christ. As such, it was not to be feared and dreaded as the coming

doomsday but looked forward to with joy and anticipation. He found the Scriptures replete with references to the Judgment Day and giving assurance that it will be a grand and desirable time in which mankind would be blessed:⁷⁰

“He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise ... for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.” (Psa. 98:4,9)

Instead of viewing the Judgment Day as merely condemnatory, the Pastor pointed out that the Biblical term “judgment” in the New Testament is primarily from the Greek *krisis*, meaning “a day of crisis, a time of decision, a period of trial.” After being released from the Adamic condemnation with a clean slate, resurrected mankind will be given a fresh opportunity for obeying the laws of the Kingdom. “Judgment” or *krisis*, then, suggests that this amounts to a new trial for life before the final verdict is rendered.⁷¹

That most will respond positively under the favorable conditions of that day, with Satan bound and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, is the united testimony of Scripture:

“When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9) “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.” (Isa. 29:24) “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness ... The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” (Isa. 35:8)

Hence, the Judgment Day will truly be a thousand-year opportunity of attaining to the moral and spiritual standards of righteousness, rather than merely a single twenty-four-hour day spent in rehearing and recondemning sinners back to their fate of doom. For the majority it will mean a gradual restoration to the image and

likeness of God and worthiness to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them—with blessings of Restitution and perfection of human life on earth. (Matt. 25:34) For a tiny minority of incorrigibles who stubbornly refuse to obey God and change their ways, it will mean the second death—a permanent extinction of life and state of oblivion. (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:14,15; Acts 3:22,23) ⁷²

Other Basic Beliefs

Space constraints do not permit us to consider in detail all the areas that the Pastor deemed important to Christian faith and practice. We will therefore merely list a few additional of these and lightly sketch the particular emphasis that he believed they should be given.

BAPTISM. Water baptism was considered to be one of the two basic ordinances of the church, filled with symbolic significance for the believer. Baptism was by full immersion, as practiced in the early church, and was intended only for those of mature age. It symbolized what had already taken place in the heart—death to one’s own will and full consecration to do the will of God, resulting in begetting of the Holy Spirit. This enabled the believer to discern ever more of the deep things of God as progress was made in the Christian pathway.⁷³

THE LORD’S SUPPER. This was the other basic ceremony, commonly termed the “communion service” in many churches. It was also symbolic in character, held with deepest devotion and celebrated but once a year. The Pastor believed such an annual celebration of the “Memorial Supper,” as he preferred calling it, was the most appropriate since it was scheduled on the anniversary of our Lord’s death and took the place of the typical annual Passover Supper. Such a commemoration highlighted the deep significance and sacredness of the occasion: partaking of the cup and the bread in harmony with our Lord’s request and recalling to mind primarily the great atoning sacrifice of the true “Lamb of God” which it depicted. (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

In addition, the Pastor saw a secondary application to the emblems that seemed emphasized by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, but was not perceived by most Christian

denominations: The word “communion,” or common-union, highlights the thought of participation by the members of the body of Christ in the work of sacrifice as they follow in the Master’s footsteps. Hence, to those taking part in this ceremony, there was the added thought of renewing their own consecration to be dead with Jesus in order to share with him the joys of reigning in the Kingdom.⁷⁴

THE SABBATH. Many Christians have traditionally kept Sunday as their Sabbath day, for both rest and worship, believing it to be obligatory and based on the Fourth Commandment. Pastor Russell, however, observed that this commandment was part of the Mosaic Law given exclusively to Israel and was never intended to be kept by any other nation. He believed it was appropriate for Christians to look back at the Decalogue and conform their lives to the spirit of its teachings, but not to be bound by its letter.

He saw in the Sabbath a much deeper antitypical meaning that related to the rest of faith, as enumerated by Paul in Hebrews chapter 4. This rest of faith is the privilege of all who renounce sin, trust in Jesus, consecrate their lives to God and receive the Holy Spirit to guide them in the Christian pathway. It was a condition to be entered into every day of the week, displaying a heart attitude of joy, rest and peace in the Lord, rather than merely on one day in seven.

The Pastor also recognized in the Sabbath a grand picture of the future Millennial Day of rest—the period of the Messianic reign and its program of blessing and healing for all mankind. That explained why Jesus in his earthly ministry carried out most of his healings on that day and illustrated in a practical way that the Sabbath had been designed for the benefit of man rather than as a bondage.⁷⁵

THE TABERNACLE. A subject of special interest to the Pastor, which has remained in high esteem to the present day among Bible Students, was the Tabernacle in the wilderness. This structure was set up following the escape of the Israelites from Egypt and is described in detail in the book of Exodus in the Old Testament and in the book of Hebrews in the New. In his work, *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*, written early in his ministry (1881), Pastor Russell attached great significance to its teachings as

foreshadowing the sacrificial work of Jesus and the church. As such, the types and previews of the Tabernacle confirmed God's grand purposes for mankind, providing many important details regarding the role of the church and the outpouring of Restitution blessings for the world.⁷⁶

THE GREAT PYRAMID. In studying the intricacies of the Great Pyramid, the Pastor was impressed with the spiritual lessons afforded by its passageways and measurements, as suggested earlier by certain eminent investigators. In 1890 he devoted an entire chapter to the subject in Volume Three of *Studies in the Scriptures*. He wrote:

“The Great Pyramid is certainly the most remarkable building in the world; but in the light of an investigation which has been in progress for the past thirty-two years, it acquires new interest to every Christian advanced in the study of God's Word; for it seems in a remarkable manner to teach, in harmony with all the prophets, an outline of the plan of God, past, present and future.

“The Great Pyramid ... proves to be a storehouse of important truth—scientific, historic and prophetic—and its testimony is found to be in perfect accord with the Bible, expressing the prominent features of its truths in beautiful and fitting symbols. It is by no means an addition to the written revelation: that revelation is complete and perfect, and needs no addition. But it is a strong **corroborative witness** to God's plan.”⁷⁷

Summary

These beliefs represent the fundamental teachings of Pastor Russell which have come to mark the unique emphasis of the Bible Students. Even in the brief outline presented here, it is clear that they are based solidly on Scripture and ignore the traditions and creeds that characterize so much of Christendom today. The Pastor's message, simple yet comprehensive, allows the Bible to be understood by the sincere inquirer for Truth.

Endnotes: Chapter 5

1. James Forrest, *Some Account of the Origin and Progress of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 9.
2. The earliest *Watch Tower* article written by Pastor Russell directed against the Trinity doctrine was entitled, “The Everlasting Father,” in the Oct.-Nov., 1881 issue (*Reprints*, pp. 296-298). In it he termed the concept of a triune God “the Papal heresy” held by “the churches in general,” but he did not elaborate fully. The following year there appeared in the July, 1882 issue (*Reprints*, pp. 369-376) a more extensive article entitled, “Hear, O Israel! Jehovah Our God Is One—Jehovah,” which included also a lengthy exposition of his view of the Holy Spirit.
3. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “The Holy Spirit Promised,” May 1, 1908 (hereafter cited as “Holy Spirit”), p. 4165.
4. John H. Blunt, ed., *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, “Trinity,” p. 765.
5. *Reprints*, “Jehovah Our God Is One,” Aug. 15, 1915 (hereafter cited as “Jehovah”), pp. 5748-5749.
6. *Reprints*, “Jehovah,” p. 5748.
7. *Reprints*, “Jehovah,” p. 5748.
8. *Reprints*, “Jehovah,” pp. 5747-5748.
9. *Reprints*, “Jehovah,” p. 5748.
10. *Reprints*, “Holy Spirit,” p. 4165.
11. *Reprints*, “Holy Spirit,” p. 4166.
12. *Reprints*, “Jehovah,” p. 5749.
13. Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p. 595.
14. John Newton, *Origin of Triads and Trinities*, pp. 20-21, 25-27.
15. Fritz Ridenour, ed., *So What’s the Difference?*, pp. 15, 21.
16. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, “Athanasius,” I, p. 457.
17. *Reprints*, “Redemption in Christ,” Sept. 1 and 15, 1893 (hereafter cited as “In Christ”), p. 1582.
18. *Reprints*, “In Christ,” p. 1583.
19. *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly* (hereafter cited as *Overland*), “The Divine Program—Redemption From the Curse” (hereafter cited as “Redemption”), pp. 21-22.
Note: The *Overland Monthly* magazine was started by journalist and author, Francis Bret Harte, and published in San Francisco,

California. In late 1908, Pastor Russell was asked to write a series of articles on "The Divine Purpose." These first appeared in the February 1909 issue. The response of the readership was so great that his articles presenting the Bible teaching on a variety of topics continued monthly until his death in late 1916. (See title page of the book, *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly*.)

20. *Overland*, "Redemption," p. 22.
21. *Overland*, "Redemption," pp. 22-23.
22. *Overland*, "Redemption," pp. 23-24.
23. *Overland*, "Redemption," p. 24.
24. Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (hereafter cited as Young), "Ransom," p. 794.
25. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (hereafter cited as Vine), "Ransom," III., p. 247.
26. Vine, "Ransom," III., p. 247.
27. *Reprints*, "Your Labor Is Not In Vain," April 1, 1903 (hereafter cited as "Your Labor"), pp. 3173-3174; C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The Atonement Between God and Man* (hereafter cited as *Atonement*), p. 322.
28. *Reprints*, "The Immortality of the Soul," March 1, 1911 (hereafter cited as "Soul"), p. 4774.
29. A. S. Yahuda, *Accuracy of the Bible*, pp. 156-157.
30. Young, Index-Lexicon, *nephesh*, p. 31 and *psuche*, p. 88.
31. *Reprints*, "Your Labor," p. 3174.
32. *Reprints*, "Soul," p. 4775.
33. *Reprints*, "Your Labor," p. 3174.
34. *Reprints*, "Immortality in the Early Church," June 15, 1904, p. 3382.
35. *Reprints*, "Soul," p. 4775.
36. The reference here was to the similar experiences of the Prophet Jonah in the "belly of hell" (*sheol*) after being swallowed up by a great fish and of Jesus in the tomb (*sheol*, *hades*) after his crucifixion, both for parts of three days. (Jonah 2:2, Psalms 16:10, Acts 2:27) See *Overland*, "Two Escape From Hell—No Torment There!" (hereafter cited as "Escape from Hell"), p. 362. See also *Reprints*, "What Say the Scriptures Concerning Hell?," Mar. 15 and Apr. 1, 1900 (hereafter cited as "Concerning Hell"), p. 2599.

37. Marley Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses* (hereafter cited as Cole), p. 58.
38. *The Watchtower*, "The Truth About Hell," Feb. 15, 1997, back cover.
39. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," p. 362.
40. *Reprints*, "Concerning Hell," pp. 2597-2598.
41. *Overland*, "Pains of Hell Explained to Us," p. 265.
42. *Reprints*, "Concerning Hell," p. 2599.
43. Russell, *Atonement*, p. 354.
44. *Reprints*, "Concerning Hell," pp. 2600-2601.
45. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," pp. 363-365.
46. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," p. 362.
47. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," pp. 362-363.
48. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," p. 363.
49. Cole, p. 59.
50. *Overland*, "Escape From Hell," p. 365.
51. *Pastor Russell's Sermons* (hereafter cited as *Sermons*), "Two Distinct Salvations," p. 45.
52. *Sermons*, "Two Distinct Salvations," pp. 47-48.
53. *Reprints*, "Scriptural Usage of the Term Salvation," Aug. 1, 1912 (hereafter cited as "Salvation"), p. 5078.
54. *Reprints*, "Salvation," p. 5078.
55. Russell, *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (hereafter cited as *Divine Plan*), pp. 99-100, 114-115; *Sermons*, "God's Plans vs. Man's Plans" (hereafter cited as "God's Plans"), pp. 80-81.
56. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 115; *Sermons*, "God's Plans," pp. 81-83, 91-92.
57. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 116.
58. *Sermons*, "God's Plans," pp. 91-92.
59. *Sermons*, "God's Plans," pp. 91-92.
60. Young, "Church," p. 166.
61. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 202-204, 245; *Reprints*, "Decently and in Order," Nov. 15, 1895 (hereafter cited as "In Order"), p. 1893; Edith Simon, *The Reformation*, pp. 176, 179.
62. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 273-285.

- 63. *Reprints*, “In Order,” p. 1891.
- 64. *Reprints*, “In Order,” p. 1891.
- 65. *What Pastor Russell Said*, “Meetings,” pp. 470-484.
- 66. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 124; see also pp. 117-136.
- 67. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 81.
- 68. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 81-82.
- 69. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 84-86.
- 70. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 137-148; *Overland*, “The Divine Program —The Judgment Scene Before the Great White Throne” (hereafter cited as “Judgment Scene”), pp. 37-43.
- 71. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 138; *Overland*, “Judgment Scene,” p. 37.
- 72. *Overland*, “Judgment Scene,” p. 42.
- 73. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 434-442.
- 74. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 461-469.
- 75. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 379-394; *Overland*, “The Sabbath Day,” pp. 278-283.
- 76. Russell, *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*, Preface.
- 77. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 314-315.



The Pastor Speaking at a Jewish Mass Meeting, Hippodrome Theatre, New York City (1910)
The return of Israel to its homeland was among the prophetic beliefs widely proclaimed by the Pastor.

6

Prophetic Expectations

PASTOR Russell was exposed to the significant role of prophecy in the Bible's message early in his career through contacts with Adventist believers. These prophecies spoke of the destinies of people, nations and mighty empires, in both the Old and New Testaments. They unveiled God's purposes in progressive stages and provided many details relating to the Messiah, his First and Second Advents, and the eventual establishment of his Kingdom.

The Pastor recognized that such weighty emphasis on prophecy as found in the Bible deserved due appreciation and attention in his ministry. Especially was this true when he became convinced that the Biblical "end times" had begun and that the world had already entered its final stage—the Harvest of the Gospel Age. Though these Biblical prophetic teachings were either scoffed at or ignored by much of Christendom, the Pastor restored them to a vital place in the faith of the believer. The following depict some of the highlights of these prophetic expectations.

The Second Advent

Pastor Russell firmly believed that Jesus, as announced in Scripture, would return to earth "for some purpose, in some manner, and at some time," as he expressed it.¹ He was convinced that all familiar with the Bible admitted as much, though some were

unwilling to think of it in literal terms or accept it as a personal coming. But to him, the force of the Scripture testimony was unmistakable. For “without the [personal] Second Coming of Christ the entire Divine Program would come to naught—would fail to bring the blessings needed. Our Lord came the first time to redeem. He comes the second time to deliver the redeemed ones.”²

In reflecting on the purpose of Jesus’ Second Advent, the Pastor construed it far differently from what was commonly believed. Many viewed it in fearful terms as marking God’s judgment upon a sinful world and the end of all hope of Salvation. On the contrary, he held it to be “the beginning of the glorious epoch of Millennial blessings,” resulting in “eternal life in Paradise” for all the willing and obedient of mankind.³ From a proper standpoint, the event was not to be feared, but looked forward to with joy and anticipation.

The first to experience deliverance at the Second Coming of the Lord would be the faithful followers of Christ, the church class of believers. These had been given a special promise in Jesus’ farewell sermon: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) These would be rewarded in the first resurrection, not as an end in itself, but to become participants with Christ as his joint heirs to rule and bless the remainder of mankind.

This feature of the Second Advent, which would extend throughout the Kingdom era, would bring the benefits of Godly instruction to the unbelieving masses of mankind, both the living and the dead. These are to hear the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10) and be privileged to walk up the highway of holiness that leads to human perfection and restoration. (Isa. 35:8)⁴ Thus viewed, the object of Christ’s Return was indeed something to be desired rather than dreaded.

The manner of Christ’s appearing during his Second Advent was also understood quite differently from the usual interpretation. The common expectation that Jesus would return as a fleshly being, somehow witnessed by earth’s billions all at the same time with their natural eyesight, was regarded as a “grave misapprehension” of Scripture teaching. At issue here was the meaning of the angels’ declaration to Jesus’ close followers at his ascension: “Ye men of

Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go.” (Acts 1:11) Also of concern was the statement, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.” (Rev. 1:7)

The Pastor felt that those who took these texts to mean that Jesus would return as a fleshly being to be recognized by all were faced with strong contradictions that could not be answered: First, the Bible states that Jesus was put to death in the flesh and quickened, or made alive, in the spirit. (1 Pet. 3:18, literal Greek) And second, Jesus said that the world would see him no more and that only his followers would be privileged to do so. (John 14:19) ⁵ It would not be with the natural eye that any would behold the Lord in his Return. The world’s masses, still rebellious and unconverted at his Return, would “see” only from the standpoint of being made aware of the far-reaching consequences of the event. His own followers would at first “see” him only with the eye of faith by their discernment of prophetic fulfillments; not until after their glorification would they behold him “as he is” for then they would “be like him.” (Heb. 9:28, 1 John 3:2) ⁶

Elaborating on the manner of Christ’s Return, the Pastor wrote:

“It is worthy of notice that the angels laid stress upon the manner of the going, and that the manner agrees with what the Bible tells us respecting our Lord’s second coming. He went quietly, secretly, unknown to the world—he is to return as a thief in the night; [2 Pet. 3:10, Matt. 24:42-44] and none will know of his return except those whose eyes of understanding will be opened to discern the signs of the presence of the Son of Man. These will be his loyal, saintly few. So Jesus explained, saying that at his second coming it would be for a time as it was in the days of Noah—mankind would be eating, drinking, planting and marrying, and would not know of his presence.—Matt. 24:37-39.” ⁷

But the most surprising aspect of the Pastor’s teaching regarding the Lord’s Return was his understanding of when this event

would occur and that, in fact, it had already taken place in an initial sense—recognized only by believers. He wrote:

“Some expect an actual coming and presence of the Lord, but **set the time** of the event a long way off, claiming that through the efforts of the Church in its present condition the world must be converted [first] ... [Only when] Satan [is] bound, and the knowledge of the Lord caused to fill the whole earth, and when the nations learn war no more, then ... the Lord will come to wind up earthly affairs, reward believers and condemn sinners ...

“But when God’s Word and plan are viewed as a whole ... [the Scriptures] will all be found to favor the opposite view ... that Christ comes before the conversion of the world, and reigns for the purpose of converting the world ...”⁸

More pointedly, early in his ministry Pastor Russell became convinced from world events and prophetic fulfillments that the Biblical “end of the age” when Christ would return had begun. Drawing upon Adventist teachings that emphasized the time prophecies of Daniel, the Jubilee time types, and the historical parallels in the ending of the Jewish and Gospel ages, he understood that the initial phase of Christ’s Return had already occurred in 1874. This event was responsible for the extraordinary shaping of church and world affairs taking place. He also believed that a proper appreciation of the Second Advent and the many prophecies connected with it called for viewing it not as occurring merely in one instant of time, but as being fulfilled over a period of years in a progressive series of events. These would include the momentous happenings during the transition period from the turbulent removal of the kingdoms of this world to the full establishment of Christ’s Kingdom in glory and power.⁹

He also saw how the correct meaning of the Greek word *parousia* served as the key for a proper understanding of the various signs of the Second Advent that Jesus outlined in Matthew chapter 24. When correctly translated “presence” instead of “coming” as in the authorized King James version, *parousia* places the question

posed by the disciples to the Master in a whole new light. They were not asking how they would know when Jesus' **coming** was near; rather they were inquiring, "What shall be the sign [indication] of thy **presence**, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Matt. 24:3) ¹⁰

Such an understanding was strengthened by several literal translations of the New Testament, such as Wilson's *Diaglott* and Rotherham's *Emphasized New Testament*. After struggling for some years over the proper rendering of *parousia*, in the third edition of his work, J. B. Rotherham wrote:

"In this edition the word *parousia* is uniformly rendered 'presence' ('coming,' as a representative of this word, being set aside) ... The sense of 'presence' [in the twenty-four times the term is used in the New Testament] is so plainly shown by the contrast with 'absence' (implied in 2 Cor. 10:10, and expressed in Phil. 2:12) that the question naturally arises,—Why not always so render it? [After further commentary, he concluded with:] Hence ... 'presence' may be the most widely and permanently satisfying translation of the looked-for *parousia* of the Son of Man."¹¹

Viewed in the light of these corrected translations, the significant events that were predicted to occur in Matthew 24—such as unprecedented trouble threatening the life of all flesh, defilement of true doctrines in the church, and the pretenses of visible Christs and false prophets—would all be indications that Jesus' Return had already commenced. As Chief Reaper in the Harvest or End of the Age, he would be actively engaged in separating the "wheat" from the "tares," and completing the calling out of the church class before dealing with the world in measured judgments and blessings. His presence would then continue throughout the thousand-year kingdom to follow, being recognized at last by everyone through the eyes of their understanding and appreciated as their rightful appointed ruler—King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Rev. 17:14)

The Pastor also gave attention to other Greek words in the New Testament that characterized the Second Advent, such as *epiphania* (bright-shining) and *apokalupsis* (revealing). He believed the revealing of the Lord's presence began with the faithful of the church,

then gradually extended to the world in judgments against all unrighteousness. For the faithful, the bright-shining of Christ's presence accounted for the increased brilliancy of the light of Truth regarding the Bible and the Plan of God, as well as providing deeper insights into the significant events of the Harvest period. In contrast, the world would remain in darkness during the early manifestations of Christ's Presence and would be perplexed in respect to the troubles and distresses breaking upon them.¹²

On the one hand, the increasing light brought an awakening of rights and wrongs and injustices against the people; and it exposed corruption and evil in even the highest realms. But on the other hand, the bright-shining had the effect of quickening selfish propensities and discontentment, leading ominously to a climax of catastrophe predicted to occur at the consummation of the age. It remained for the later stages of Christ's *parousia* to inaugurate the long-promised Kingdom of Christ and bring to pass what the Pastor believed was the most important aspect of the Second Coming: the blessing of all the families of the earth—including all who have ever lived.¹³

In summing up, we note how seriously the Pastor viewed the subject of the Second Advent. His teaching on this reflected the intensity and prominence that the Scriptures themselves give it. Yet how different was his view of its purpose, its manner, and its timing from anything heard before. This was not an event to be feared but to be sought with joy and gladness for both the church and the world. It was the glorious and desirable time to which the prophets pointed and for which the whole creation groaned and travailed—the world waiting for its blessing and uplift; and the church, for its deliverance and exaltation. And all of this was to occur during our Lord's *parousia* and his Millennial Kingdom reign!

The Time of Trouble

Pastor Russell, in discerning the signs of the times and increasing global distresses of his day, became convinced that the End of the Age had commenced and that the world had entered that ominous period Scripturally designated as “the time of trouble.” He referred to Daniel's prophecy of “the time of the end,” when Michael [“He who is like God”—Jesus as God's representative]

would stand up [assume authority at his Return] and there would be “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1); to which Jesus later added, “no, nor ever shall be [again]. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” (Matt. 24:21,22) ¹⁴

Continuing in this vein, the Pastor wrote:

“The same thought is given us in Revelation, where we are distinctly told that our Lord will take unto himself his great power and reign, and at that time the nations will be angry and God’s wrath will come upon them, and that they shall be broken in pieces as a potter’s vessel under the rule of Messiah’s ‘iron rod’ of ... justice. (Rev. 11:15-18) The Apostle Paul also notes the coming of this [day] as a sure thing, and declares that our Lord, at his second advent, shall be revealed ‘in flaming fire, taking vengeance’ ... against everything that shall oppose the laws of Messiah’s Kingdom.— 2 Thess. 1:8” ¹⁵

This troublous period was identified by the Old Testament prophets under various names linked to the Almighty, such as the “Day of Jehovah,” the “Day of Vengeance of our God,” the “day of His wrath” and a “day of fierce anger of the LORD.” Other descriptions brought out various of its characteristics, such as “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness” (Joel 2:2); and “a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation.” (Zeph. 1:15) Additional powerful imagery was used to emphasize the destructive forces operating at that time—a whirlwind of devastation, a flood of destruction and a consuming fire.

Some of these Biblical descriptions are given in the context of impending calamity upon ancient Israel for her unfaithfulness and sins toward God. But it seems evident that the strong emphasis and repetition of the teaching as well as the all inclusive language employed require a much larger, antitypical fulfillment that encompasses all humanity at the crucial End Time. Certainly this was the interpretation of our Lord and this is what appealed to the Pastor. And he was able to identify the current global events of his day as

fitting the early pattern of trouble and distress that would shortly befall all the nations.

Specifically, the Pastor understood the “Day of Jehovah” to designate that special period of time in which God’s kingdom, under Christ, would gradually be set up in the earth, while the kingdoms of this world would pass away. The vivid Biblical imagery that was employed—wind, flood, earthquake and fire—he interpreted as symbolic, particularly when the burning or destruction of the planet earth was depicted. He strongly faulted the creeds of Christendom which improperly used these terms literally to describe this great day or epoch in a manner frightening to the people. To him they were merely meant to be descriptive of the troubles and perplexities that necessarily would accompany the sweeping worldwide changes that would occur at the end of the age.¹⁶

As justification for such a symbolic interpretation, he cited Zephaniah 3:8,9, where the prophet reveals God’s intention “to gather the nations, that I may ... pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth [governments, social order] shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” Yet afterward—after all the burning and great conflagration of trouble—mankind would still be on the earth. Most amazing of all, God would then pour out His blessing upon them: “Then will I turn to the people a pure message, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”¹⁷

The Pastor saw this time of trouble befalling mankind as a transition event from the present evil world (age) to a new arrangement under Divine control:

“The day of wrath will come in a financial, political, social and religious convulsion, in which the present earth (social order) will pass away with a great commotion, and the new heavens (spiritual powers), and the new earth (social arrangement) will come into permanent control under Emmanuel’s Government. [2 Pet. 3:10, 13] The confusion, jargon, Babel of the present, so bewildering to humanity, will give place to the pure message of Divine Truth, emancipating the world from the grievous errors which have intoxicated and bewildered it. Severe will be the cost in the destruction of

prevalent [evil] institutions, but the results will be well worth it all.”¹⁸

Though it might seem strange that the early part of the Day of the Lord should be one of trouble upon the nations, the transitional nature of the period makes this more understandable. It is necessarily a time of violent change as Christ returns with Divine authority as earth’s rightful King to overthrow Satan, the “god of this world” (by usurpation), and to abolish all the evil worldly systems more or less under his control. Neither Satan nor the majority of earth’s rulers are inclined to give up their position of control voluntarily and so will need to be forcibly evicted. Yet Christ will be victorious in the struggle as he sets up his rule of righteousness, justice and peace, and all out of harmony with the incoming Kingdom will be broken to shivers. (Psa. 2:1-6, 9-11; Rev. 2:27) ¹⁹

The Pastor believed that the mounting troubles of the Day of the Lord and their timing would be very bewildering to those of the world who were not Scripturally informed. In comparison with the long ages of the past, he saw these troubles as coming suddenly—although not as a normal day fulfilled in twenty-four hours. The Day would come “as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2) in the sense that its appearance would be stealthy and unobserved at first by the world in general. It would also be in spasms, with the precipitous events becoming more frequent and severe as the Day dawned, “as travail upon a woman with child.” (1 Thess. 5:3) Relief would come only with the birth of the new order of things—the full establishment of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom on earth.²⁰

Speculating on the length of this period of trouble upon the earth, he wrote:

“In view of these lessons from the past [showing that most fulfillments of Bible prophecy were gradual in their outworking], what should we think about the future? We should not conclude that everything would be transformed inside of one minute, or one hour, or one day, but gradually ...

“If the time of the end is a slow period, how long would this period be, in which present institutions will be ousted, and the present order of things be condemned

and done away with, to make way for the reign of righteousness?

“We answer ... we might expect the transition to run on a good many years. We might expect it to be five, ten or twenty years. But there is something, on the other hand, that leads us to anticipate that it will not be very long. The Lord has told us that he will ‘make a short work of it.’ [Matt. 24:22; Rom. 9:28]”²¹

Preparatory to the reign of Christ, it would be necessary for God to thoroughly purge the nations and all human institutions making up the existing social order of anything that was out of harmony with the incoming Kingdom. This is expressed in the book of Hebrews as a shaking process for which God Himself is responsible. Comparing it to the fearful cataclysmic events and disturbances of nature that accompanied the giving of the Law when His voice shook the earth, God says: “Yet once for all I will shake not the earth only, but also heaven. Now the expression ‘once for all’ indicates the final removal of everything shaken ... so that only the unshakable things will remain.” (Heb. 12:26,27, composite trans.)

Commenting on this verse, Pastor Russell wrote:

“This text is applicable to our day. The removal of all things shakable is now in progress. Only those things which are harmonious with Divine standards, which cannot be shaken, will remain. The shaking of the heavens refers to the destruction of the present religious control —Churchianity—and the shaking of the earth refers to the destruction of present social, financial and political affairs.”²²

Some might be prone to question why God, in shaping man’s affairs, would permit such a calamitous time of trouble to come upon the world. The Pastor’s response was twofold: First, that the trouble was but the natural consequence of man’s own selfishness and inhumanity to fellow man. And second, that it was God’s way of squaring the accounts of Justice—of recompensing man for his deliberate acts of violence against the righteous and innocent through ages past.

In this regard he wrote:

“Civilization which now prevails will work its own destruction at the very moment when, in many respects, it will appear to be reaching the climax of prosperity. It will thus furnish an everlasting lesson ... of the destructive tendency of selfishness, the outgrowth of sin. And while [the time of trouble] is termed ‘the day of the Lord’s wrath,’ [because coming through disregard of His counsels and the result of unrighteousness] it would appear to be the natural outworking of violation of Divine Law, rather than a direct interference by the Almighty in human affairs.”²³

“God’s message ... to the world has been, ‘Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from ... guile; depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.’ (Psa. 34:13, 14) ... [But it] ... heeded rather the voice of avarice—Get all you can of riches and honor and power in this world, no matter what the method by which you obtain it, and no matter who loses by your gain. In a word, the trouble of this Day of the Lord would not come, could not come, if the principles of God’s law were observed to any considerable extent.”²⁴

Finally, when the raging elements of the great time of trouble will have accomplished their purpose in God’s Plan, the silver lining to the dark clouds will emerge:

“The day of trouble will end in due time, when he who spake to the raging Sea of Galilee will likewise, with authority, command the raging sea of human passion, saying, ‘Peace! Be still!’ ... Then the raging, clashing elements shall recognize the authority of ‘Jehovah’s Anointed,’ ‘the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;’ and in the reign of Christ thus begun ‘shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ ”²⁵

The Battle of Armageddon

Yet another Biblical designation for the end-time trouble coming upon the world, one frequently referred to by Pastor Russell, is the “Battle of Armageddon.” This is a term that has been

increasingly alluded to in our day as well by statesmen and journalists alike. Armageddon (“Hill of Megiddo”) refers to an important city state in ancient Israel near Mt. Carmel that controlled a strategic pass on the road linking Gaza and Damascus. According to archeological findings, it was destroyed by the armies of antiquity and rebuilt more than twenty times since its founding about 3500 B.C. In the book of Revelation it is used in a symbolic sense to represent the great conflagration with which this age will end.

The basic text employing the figurative use of Armageddon is found in Revelation 16:13-16. Here “three unclean spirits like frogs” are seen coming “out of the mouth” of a dragon, a beast and a false prophet. These spirits are said to be those “of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty ... And he gathered them together into a place called ... Armageddon.”

The Pastor carefully prefaced his explanation of these verses in a way that demonstrated his sensitivity to those who might find themselves a part of the great systems and institutions that were symbolized here. In order not to be misunderstood, especially “by good Christian people,” he cautioned:

“As we present our interpretation of the symbols of Revelation, we realize that the Word of God conveys a very terrible arraignment of some of the great systems of our day—some that we have long revered and esteemed—that we have thought contained many who are godly in word and in deed. Let us, therefore, clearly distinguish between individuals and systems. We say nothing against the godly individual, but in the interpretation of the Word of God what we have to say is merely in respect to these systems ... We discuss PRINCIPLES, DOCTRINES, ALWAYS; individuals, NEVER!”²⁶

He then identified the beast and the false prophet as being the nominal ecclesiastical systems, mother and daughter churches respectively, and the dragon as the civil powers in the world. This did not mean that the components of these groups were all

necessarily evil; but it portrayed the organizations as ruling with a high hand—church-state systems that oppressed the civilized world more than benefiting it. The symbol of the frog was used to portray the pomposity, air of superiority and continual croaking of these systems. Anyone in conflict with their boastful, unscriptural claims would be ruthlessly dealt with, both from the church pulpit and the secular press. The frog-like spirits—pernicious and deceiving false doctrines—would arouse the kings of earth and “gather them together to the Armageddon battle and destruction” at God’s appointed time.²⁷

In this final figurative encounter, on the one side will be the “kings of earth”; on the other, our returned Lord accompanied by the resurrected saints—all in battle array. The Pastor depicted the “kings of earth” in three distinct categories: First come the “ecclesiastical kings and princes, with their retinue of clergy and faithful adherents,” “gathered in solid phalanx.” Joining them are the “political kings and princes,” “all in high places” with their followers. And finally, the “financial kings and merchant princes, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever yet exercised in the world,” also appear, on the same side as the others. In viewing this debacle, “Men’s hearts [will be] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven [ecclesiastical systems] shall be shaken.” (Luke 21:26) ²⁸

Pastor Russell saw the symbolic Armageddon of the Bible as the conclusion of the seemingly endless controversy “between Truth and Error, right and wrong, God and Mammon,” which would close out the Gospel Age and usher in the Millennium. “We are not to expect any gathering of the people literally to the Hill of Megiddo,” he said. He also viewed it as taking place from two different standpoints: First, as a process that had already begun in his day that was worsening in spasms; and second, as a future climax to the Day of God’s Wrath, just preceding the introduction of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom.²⁹

Accordingly, Armageddon was seen as God’s hour of judgment upon both the religious and civil components of society. Christendom stood condemned on many counts: insidious false teachings

(“doctrines of devils”), rejection of Bible authority, intermixing of Christian with pagan concepts, perversion of the true Gospel into forms and ceremonies, arrogant and proud clergy, lust for wealth and power, and flagrant compromise of Divine standards for those of the world. The civil powers were indicted on other counts: corruption and lack of integrity in highest offices of government, lack of justice and equity for the people, favoring the wealthy and privileged classes over the masses, funneling of national resources to support military instead of peaceful pursuits, and bitter struggles between capital and labor.³⁰

The inevitable result of such extensive disregard of both God and fellow man could only be that which was foretold:

“Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense.” (Isa. 35:4)

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge his people.” (Psa. 50:3,4)

“Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men ... And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles ... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone [everlastingly destroyed].” (Rev. 19:17-20)

The victor in this final battle is our returned Lord in his capacity as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. With his sharp sword he will “smite the nations: and ... rule them with a rod of iron” as “he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” (Rev. 19:15,16) Joining with him are the faithful saints of God, also wielding two-edged swords, “to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints.” (Psa. 149:5-9)

With the Bible's use of such powerful descriptive language, it is imperative that we realize these accounts are highly symbolic. The prophets are not speaking of literal swords, literal chains or literal fetters of iron. What is intended is to make clear that through a series of earth-shaking events, God will assert His authority to bring about a spectacular change of rulership as His incoming Kingdom of righteousness replaces the corrupt and evil systems that have dominated this world. Everything that is out of harmony with God's principles of equity and justice will be removed. (Heb. 12:26,27)

In this regard, the Pastor wanted to make abundantly clear what the position of the believers still in the flesh should be as these events begin to unfold. Are they to take up arms or carnal weapons to fight the nations and evil forces that are resisting God's incoming Kingdom? Most decidedly not. Rather, they are to "set an example of 'Godliness with contentment,' and always by word as well as by example discourage not only violence, but even discontent."³¹ Additionally, they are to make skillful use of the "sword of the Spirit ... the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17) and to proclaim faithfully its message of Truth, which to some extent even now binds and fetters errors.³²

Further, the Pastor wrote:

"Dear brethren, in these coming days of trouble, which may be very near, the opportunity may come to you and to me to be either strife-breeders or peace-makers. Let us see the will of the Lord in this matter, that we are called to peace, and that the declaration of the Master is, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'

"Let us seek rather to subdue and calm the passions of men in the coming strife, and to do nothing to augment them or to kindle the fires of passion which we know are about to consume the present social fabric. Let us point out to those with whom we have any influence that the worst form of government in the whole world is better than no government—better than anarchy, a thousand times. Let us remind them of the fact that in

God's providence we have the best of all earthly governments.

"Let us remind them, too, that the Lord has told us to wait for Him and not to take matters into our own hands. His words are, 'Wait ye upon Me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the **fire of my jealousy**. For then will I turn to the people a pure language (message), that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent.'—Zeph. 3:8,9." ³³

"This will not be literal fire devouring the literal earth, but a symbolic fire of trouble devouring the political, financial, social and religious structure of the world, and preparing [the people] for the great blessings of Messiah's kingdom."³⁴

The Battle of Armageddon thus will pave the way for universal recognition of the appointed King of Earth, Christ Jesus—of whom it was foretold that God would "set [him] upon [His] holy hill of Zion." (Psa. 2:6) When this finally comes to pass, all will appreciate—in the words of the Pastor—that:

"The judgments of the Lord are not designed to crush or destroy humanity, but to destroy utterly the systems of error, bondage and superstition which have fettered humanity and hindered them from fuller progress and development in the knowledge and favor of God. With the fall of the great systems (Babylon, confusion) [and the start of Kingdom blessings to follow], men's eyes will begin to open ... As a result, the high praises of God will arise as a sweet savor."³⁵

The final result will be as spoken by the Prophet Isaiah:

"In this mountain [Christ's Millennial Kingdom] shall the LORD of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things ... And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering [ignorance, superstition, bondage] cast

over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces.” (Isa. 25:6-8)

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” (Isa. 25:9)

“And the ransomed of the LORD [all mankind] shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. 35:10)

The Reestablishment of Israel

Pastor Russell viewed God’s dealings with the Jews, in both ancient and modern times, as quite remarkable and was impressed with the prominent place they were accorded in Scripture. He saw their role as God’s Chosen People surpassed in significance only by that of the church, the saintly few who would be footstep followers of the Master. It was to Abraham and his natural seed that the privilege of becoming the blessing nation on earth during the thousand-year Kingdom was promised, even as the glorified members of the Messiah class were to be honored to rule in the heavenly phase of that same Kingdom. The faithful of both houses of Israel, spiritual and fleshly, under the glorified Messiah, would become the means by which the blessings of Restitution would be brought to the masses of mankind.

For centuries, however, almost the whole of nominal Christianity had lost sight of God’s foreordained purpose to use natural Israel as a light to the Gentiles and even of His intention to restore them to a responsible place among the family of nations. The Pastor was deeply grieved by this lapse. He was further concerned that much of Christendom cast only condemnation upon the Jews while claiming for itself the very blessings promised to Israel. He considered such widespread spiritualizing of the promises of God to His people of old as a serious error which “has worked injury and confusion to the minds of many Christian[s].”³⁶

In spite of natural Israel's repeated unfaithfulness, the Pastor was convinced the Bible made it clear that God's purposes toward David and his seed remained unchanged:

"If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips." (Psa. 89:30-34)

"Hath God cast away His people? God forbid ... God hath not cast away His people which he foreknew ... And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob ... For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:1, 2,26,29)

As the colorful story of Israel unfolds on the pages of history and in the Bible, it becomes evident that their experiences as a people were unique in that they were closely supervised by the Heavenly Father. When they made reasonable efforts to obey Him under the Law Covenant arrangement, they were blessed in "basket and store," even as their great leader Moses had indicated. But when they shamefully dishonored their God, flagrantly disobeyed His statutes and selfishly sought for worldly gain, they were severely chastised. In fact, their wayward course eventually led to their extinction as an independent nation—not once but twice: first at the hands of Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's day and later by the Roman legions under Titus.

A fascinating scholarly exercise involves tracing Israel's national cycles of life and death, inclusive of the Captivity and Diaspora periods, which culminate in the miraculous rebirth of the nation in our day. This event has stunned observers of the world scene because nothing of the kind has ever been witnessed before. In the words of William Albright, renowned archeologist and professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University:

“It is without parallel in the annals of human history that a nation carried into captivity for seventy years should return to resume its national life; that after nearly six hundred years this same nation should again be scattered worldwide for nearly two thousand years and retain its identity; and that this people should then return to rebuild its ancient homeland and achieve statehood among the family of nations.”³⁷

In the Pastor’s day, however, the Jews were still located in the various countries of the world where they had been scattered. Some sporadic efforts at establishing a homeland had been undertaken to provide a refuge, especially for the poor among them, and for those yet being persecuted in various lands—notably Russia and Eastern Europe. But no real progress was made until Theodor Herzl arrived on the scene: His was a message of national aspiration that focused on Palestine and quickened the pulse of the people. At first only political, the movement gradually took on religious overtones as well; but, at the untimely death of Dr. Herzl in 1904, it languished and was in danger of faltering altogether.

It was here that Pastor Russell saw the opportunity to provide a note of encouragement and consolation to the house of Israel, in harmony with the words of the Prophet Isaiah: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare [margin: “appointed time”] is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.” (Isa. 40:1,2) Accordingly, the Pastor addressed the Jewish community with the welcome words of Scripture that Zionism would not fail as many feared, but that it was “about to take on fresh vigor; that its most prosperous days [were] yet to come.”³⁸

In line with this theme, the Pastor counseled the most saintly and earnest of the Jews to consider moving to Palestine quickly to have a part in the rejuvenation work to be expected there and which would shortly become “astonishing to the world.” The wealthier among them he urged to support these enterprises by their finances and thus to encourage their brethren. In so doing, both groups—those who bravely were willing to pioneer in rebuilding the land of Israel and those who remained behind but sympathetically offered

their support—would be cooperating with the Lord in prospering the work of Zionism.³⁹ That which was foretold by the Hebrew prophets was now about to come to pass:

“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.” (Psa. 102:13,14)

Such a message of comfort and encouragement was quite a surprise, coming as it did from a noted Christian pastor. It was also a lonely voice, as none other in the public arena could be heard sounding such a note. Yet to Pastor Russell this was a matter of pressing concern and, far from being the fantasy of a “prophetic fanatic” as some charged, merely reflected the resounding testimony of Scripture. Such convinced him that the time for the return of God’s favor to Israel was now at hand and should be acted upon.

In Volume Three of his landmark work, *Studies in the Scriptures*, originally published in 1890, he had already devoted an entire chapter to “The Restoration of Israel,” which set forth the basic Biblical teaching on the subject. In it he outlined the unique position of the Jewish people in the Plan of God and how they represented a microcosm of all mankind. He wrote:

“In them [the Jewish people] we have a monument of antiquity of inestimable value, upon which are recorded, in clearly legible characters, the origin, progress and final destiny of the whole human race—a living and intelligent witness of the gradual outworking of a wonderful purpose in human affairs, in exact conformity with the predictions of their divinely inspired prophets and seers.”⁴⁰

He also alerted his readers to the momentous events anticipated in the very near future:

“That the re-establishment of Israel in the land of Palestine is one of the events to be expected in this Day of the Lord, we are fully assured.”⁴¹

The Pastor went on to reference some of the major utterances of the Old Testament prophets respecting Israel’s regathering. Amos

spoke of the time when God would bring again the “captivity” [idiomatic for a former state of prosperity]⁴² of His people Israel and cause them to “build the waste cities” and “plant vineyards” and “gardens” in the land. When God would bring this to pass, “they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” (Amos 9:11,14,15)

The Prophet Jeremiah continued in the same vein by predicting that “the city” (Jerusalem) would be “builded upon her own heap,” and that even “the palace” (the temple) would be restored. A great company of Jews would return from “the north country” (Russia, where nearly two-thirds resided in the Pastor’s day) and from “the coasts of the earth.” They would come “with weeping, and with supplications”; for “He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob.” (Jer. 30:18; 31:8-11)

These prophecies of the return of the Jews to the Land were all in fulfillment of a basic promise that God had made centuries earlier. To Abraham God had said, “Lift up now thine eyes ... northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” (Gen. 13:14, 15) And again, “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” (Gen. 17:8)

The seed of Abraham was later narrowed specifically to his descendants through Isaac and Jacob; only these were identified as beneficiaries of the Promised Land as part of the original covenant made with Abraham:

“The LORD our God ... hath remembered His covenant for ever ... which ... He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.” (Psa. 105:7-11)

Of special interest to the Pastor were specific time prophecies of the Bible that to him spelled out the very year of God’s returning favor to Israel. He alluded to these in his writings and as guest speaker before Jewish audiences. He identified Jeremiah 16:18;

Zechariah 9:9,12; and Isaiah 40:1,2 as “double of punishment” prophecies from which it was possible to pinpoint the year 1878 as a most significant early starting point. That was the year that the Cypress Accord was reached, the Berlin Congress of Nations met and the land of Palestine was opened for colonization; and it marked the beginning of the first permanent Jewish settlement there—Petah Tikvah.⁴³

He also laid heavy emphasis upon the “Times of the Gentiles” prophecy of Luke 21:24 and correlated it with the “seven times” of chastening upon Israel, as forecast in Leviticus chapter 26. He calculated that the “seven times” referred to a period of 2,520 years in which “Jerusalem” (as a symbol of the Jewish nation) would be “trodden down of the Gentiles” and that this period of subjection would last until 1914. He saw that year as the termination of the Gentile lease of world dominion and removal of the restraint on the rise of Israel.⁴⁴

On the basis of these prophecies, the Pastor could predict what was coming, but he did not live to see their full implementation. With the ending of the “Times of the Gentiles,” major impetus was given to the rebirth of Israel: The First World War rolled back the Turkish Empire and freed the returned Jews from its rule. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 formally guaranteed Jews the right to establish a national homeland in Palestine. The way seemed open at last for a major exodus of Jews to occur from all the lands in which they had been driven. But a foreboding element mentioned in the prophecies remained to be fulfilled in the saga of Jewish emigration to their homeland:

“Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD,
and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many
hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain,
and from every hill.” (Jer. 16:16)

The “fishers” aptly pictured the Zionist movement in its efforts to lure and persuade fellow Jews to Palestine. But, while creating quite a stir and rekindling spirits, it failed to accomplish its goal. Hence it remained for the “hunters”—the determined anti-Semitic foes in Germany, Poland and Russia—to do their nefarious work. This triggered the flight of the first large wave of Jews to Palestine,

140,000 of them, in the early 1930s. They were the fortunate ones that escaped the even more bitter Nazi persecution and the Holocaust that were to follow.

At last the stage was set: With the close of World War II, a U.N. Partition Plan was passed in 1947, which dedicated a small portion of Palestine for the exclusive use of the Jews. This was quickly followed in 1948 by a world-stirring event—a declaration of independence by the leaders of Israel, and a brief war with surrounding Arab states to assert that right. By such a series of providential happenings, the unprecedented and miraculous rebirth of the nation was precipitated. Israel was restored and a new chapter of God's dealings with her opened up.

More than fifty years of modern Israel's existence are now history. It has been a period of both growing pains within and continual hostilities without. Such tensions were probably inevitable for a sole democratic state in the tumultuous Middle East and in the face of continuing age-old conflicts between Arabs and Jews. Yet how long this period of turmoil will continue prior to the Millennial Kingdom is not directly revealed in the Bible. The Pastor did caution, however, that before realizing her potential in God's Plan as a blessing nation, Israel would yet face one final crisis—termed “Jacob's trouble” in the Scriptures. (Jer. 30:7)

The circumstances of this momentous event are detailed in portions of the prophecies of Ezekiel (chapters 38 and 39) and Zechariah (chapters 12 and 14). A distant powerful nation from the north (“Magog”) will unite with many allies to attack restored Israel, whose people once again are prospering in their land and “dwelling safely” in “unwalled villages.” The enemy's avowed objective is “to take a spoil and ... a prey,” showing no mercy, especially to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In human terms, it will be a mighty military armada that will swarm over the Jews and threaten their complete annihilation. Yet when hope is all but lost, God himself interposes on behalf of His people of old.

In a turning point of history, God will openly defend Israel as He did in ancient times and deliver them from their enemies. This will be the dramatic moment of awakening, both for Israel and the world, when God again intervenes in the affairs of men. Israel's

darkest hour will be transformed into a triumph of unmatched proportions. In one climactic event, not only will the whole world be apprised of God's purposes for Israel, but the eyes of the Jews will be opened at last. In the words of the Pastor:

“[‘Jacob’s trouble’ will show] to the Jew the power of Messiah **manifested** in some way effecting their deliverance. [With] their recognition of the long waited for Messiah ... as the one whom they had once rejected, and ... ‘whom they have pierced’ (Zech. 12), God will ‘pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication’ and they shall mourn for their sin, and be accepted again into fellowship with God.”⁴⁵

As a side note, the Pastor used this discussion of “Jacob’s trouble” and its favorable outcome for Israel to highlight his conviction that Jews were not to be converted to Christianity in order to merit God’s favor:

“This prophecy [Zech. 12:10] proves decidedly that it is not the Divine intention that the Jews as a race shall become Christians, or become associated with the Christian systems of this age ...”⁴⁶ “Those Jews who believe in the Abrahamic promise, in God’s testimony through the Prophets and in the message of Moses and the Law, must not, cannot, identify themselves with any other nation or with any other religion. To do so would be to stultify themselves and to discredit themselves as Jews, and to cut themselves off from those special earthly promises which, in the Divine arrangement, have been theirs since Abraham’s day, and which are now about to be fulfilled.”⁴⁷

The chastening and purging effect of “Jacob’s trouble” will lead directly into the fulfillment of the prophetic destiny of God’s “Chosen People.” As part of God’s earthly Kingdom to be established worldwide, the faithful remnant of Israel will be used as the channel of Messiah to bring blessings to the nations. At long last, these special promises to Israel of foreordained service to mankind will be realized. All the Gentiles, as they cooperate in this Divine arrangement, are to be blessed both morally and physically, and to

be uplifted out of their sinful conditions. But “to the Jew [has been granted] the first place in the earthly phase of Messiah’s Kingdom through which all the families of the earth will be blessed.”⁴⁸ (Gen. 22:16-18; Jer. 33:7-11; Zech. 8:13-16; Zech. 8:20-23; Isa. 27:6)

The Deliverance of the Church

Pastor Russell, together with all believers in Christ, looked forward to the time of the completion of the church class. That glad day would see the end of their struggles against fleshly weaknesses, and against the powers of sin and darkness and the allurements of this world. It would be the day of their blessed “change” in the “First Resurrection,” “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality”; when they “shall be like” their Redeemer, “see him as he is” and share his glory. (Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:53,54; 1 John 3:2)

Further, in the Pastor’s words:

“Gladly, therefore, do all of God’s consecrated people wait for the blessed change promised at our Lord’s Second Coming—when that which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power; when that which is sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory; when that which is sown [a natural] body shall be raised a spirit body. (1 Cor. 15:42-44) Surely such, having prayed, ‘Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven,’ are waiting for the King and God’s time for establishing His Kingdom for the blessing of the world.”⁴⁹

The Psalmist, looking forward to that grand day, and speaking on behalf of Christ and the church, sublimely stated, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” (Psa. 17:15) To which the Pastor added:

“What a hope is ours; what a glorious hope! No wonder the Apostle referred to it as that ‘blessed hope’ and connected it with the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at his Second Advent. (Titus 2:13)”⁵⁰

But a burning question, close to the heart of every believer throughout the age, remained—How long? How long would it be

until Jesus returns for his bride and until his Kingdom is established? Was there any way of knowing when these cherished events would actually take place? More pointedly, the Pastor queried whether there were hidden Bible prophecies that specifically spelled out the very year that such would occur. He soon became convinced that there were.

As early as 1876, he placed particular emphasis upon the “Times of the Gentiles” prophecy spoken by Jesus (Luke 21:24) that assigned a limit to the dominion granted to earth’s great ruling powers. He understood this time span to be “seven times,” or a period of 2,520 years ending in 1914.⁵¹ He then assumed that this event would also herald the completion of the church class and see the culmination of their glorious hope. For most of his ministry and especially for twenty-five years after publication of *The Time is at Hand*, Volume Two in the *Scripture Studies* series, he confidently set forth this view and connected the church’s glorification with the year 1914.⁵²

However, toward the close of his ministry, the Pastor began to realize that certain end-of-the-age Bible prophecies had not yet fully unfolded and that more time would be required for the culmination of these events.⁵³ Whereas he seemed convinced that the “Times of the Gentiles” would end as thought in 1914, early in that year he suggested that it might take a period of time of unknown duration actually to evict the nations after their lease of power expired. Further, there was a possibility that the church would not be changed immediately, but for a brief interval of unknown length would remain on this side of the veil to engage in preparatory Kingdom work.⁵⁴

By November 1914, the Pastor clearly stated in his journal that the “Gentile Times” had indeed ended, as seemed verified by the outbreak of the great World War in Europe. He then reiterated his conviction that the church’s exaltation to glory would follow shortly, though the exact time was not clear from Scripture. Beneath a heading, “the Expectations of the Church,” he wrote:

“Some one may ask, Since the fulfilment of the various time prophecies demonstrates that God’s methods of operating are slow, may it not be that the kingdom will

not be ushered in for five, ten, or even twenty-five years? Our reply is, we are not a prophet; we merely believe that we have come to the place where the Gentile times have ended.”⁵⁵

Then on the very next page, under the heading, “The Deliverance of the Church,” he asked:

“What shall we expect concerning this great change coming in the next year? It seems to us possible that one year might work all this great change that we are expecting. But perhaps it will not be so. We must wait and see. We merely suggest the possibility that in one year all these great things will come ...

“We cannot be far from our change; and we advise that all of the Lord’s people live day by day just as though this was the last day on this side of the veil, and that tonight or tomorrow would usher us into the glorious things beyond the veil.”⁵⁶

In attempting to assess the meaning of the events that were transpiring, the Pastor sensed that, if the church were not glorified within a year or so, there might be widespread disappointment and a sense of betrayal within the Bible Student movement. To soften such possibility, he wrote:

“The present is a time of testing, we believe, to many of the Lord’s people. Have we in the past been active merely because we hoped for our glorious change in A.D. 1914, or have we been active because of our love and loyalty to the Lord and his message and the brethren! ... Let us see to it that we testify to the Lord by our faithfulness in letting our light shine more and more, demonstrating our loyalty to him even unto death.”⁵⁷

Nevertheless, as the months passed and reality began to set in that the deliverance of the church had not occurred, the Pastor thoroughly reviewed the situation, made some candid admissions and offered further advice. In a Foreword to *The Time is at Hand*, written just before his death in October 1916, he said:

“The author acknowledges that in this book he presents the thought that the Lord’s saints might expect to be with Him in glory at the ending of the Gentile Times. This was a natural mistake to fall into, but the Lord overruled it for the blessing of His people. The thought that the Church would all be gathered to glory before October, 1914, certainly did have a very stimulating and sanctifying effect upon thousands, all of whom accordingly can praise the Lord—even for the mistake.”⁵⁸

In an earlier article in the *Watch Tower*, he had commented on his own personal reaction to the failed hopes for 1914:

“ ‘But, Brother Russell, what is your thought as to the time of our change? Were you not disappointed that it did not come when we hoped that it would?’ you will ask. No, we reply, we were not disappointed ... Brethren, those of us who are in the right attitude toward God are not disappointed at any of His arrangements. We did not wish our own will to be done; so when we found out that we were expecting the wrong thing in October, 1914, then we were glad that the Lord did not change His plan to suit us.”⁵⁹

And similarly, a few months later he wrote:

“Are we regretful that the harvest work continues? Nay, verily; we rejoice and have the pleasure each day of showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His most marvelous light; and we delight in seeing how others are being benefited and made to rejoice ... Perhaps it led us to deeper consecration and greater activity in the service of the Lord, in ourselves and for others. We therefore have nothing to regret.”⁶⁰

Regardless of this earnest testimony and many other words of counsel encouraging the brethren to press on in the narrow way, he was not able to prevent widespread disappointment and a tendency to slacken in the work. A sizable decrease in financial support necessitated drastic changes in staffing at the Brooklyn headquarters and required radical reductions in the Photo-Drama showings—as well as major curtailing of both the pilgrim and colporteur

services. But it was the newspaper work which suffered the most, as the funds needed to support field representatives in their cross country visits to the various publishers no longer became available.⁶¹

Thus, despite the partial fulfillment of prophetic expectations in the dramatic changes brought on by the “Great War,” the impact of the failed homegoing of the church was quite severe. The intensity of the turmoil and emotional stresses may also have contributed heavily to the Pastor’s own deteriorating health status. More and more, he found it difficult to maintain the rigorous activity schedule which had characterized his entire career. But no one suspected that he was as close to his end as it soon turned out to be.

The End-Time Vision

In the wake of the keen disappointment of 1914 and its aftermath, many Bible Students have found a corresponding assurance in yet another prophecy that seems to bear directly on this matter. It emanates from the Prophet Habakkuk, who spoke words of comfort and encouragement not only to his own generation, but seemingly in anticipation of events at the End of the Age as well.

“I will stand upon my watch post
And will set myself upon the tower,
And will watch to see—
What He will say unto me and
What answer I shall make
To them that oppose me.
Then the Lord answered me, saying:

“Write down the vision
And make it plain upon tables,
That everyone may read it fluently.
For there is yet a vision for the appointed time,
And it speaketh of the end
And it will not deceive;
Though it [seem to] tarry, wait for it,
Because it will surely come,
It will not delay.”

(Hab. 2:1-3, composite trans.)

It is most probable that the prophet was not able to grasp fully the significance of his own inspired utterance. God had a Plan that would benefit not only His people of old, who were about to be attacked by their enemies, but in a larger sense would bless all mankind in due time. The grander vision here seems to focus upon its culmination in the end-time Kingdom that God had designed from the foundation of the world, and of which many additional glimpses were provided by both Habakkuk and the other prophets.

The Apostle Paul lends his authority to this view in his comment in Hebrews 10:35-37, where he quotes from Habakkuk and applies this vision to the Second Coming of Christ.⁶² This would place the inauguration of the promised Kingdom—the culmination of the vision alluded to by the prophet—during the period of Christ’s presence. Since the Pastor believed the *parousia* feature of our Lord’s Return had already begun, it intensified the hope that the Millennial Kingdom was at last close at hand.

A contemporary setting for Habakkuk’s prophecy also seems indicated by the description of a watchman on a tower and the special work he was assigned to do. In the minds of most Bible Students, the name and illustration of the “Watch Tower” on the front cover of the mainstay journal of the movement for years had linked the Pastor to this role. More than any other human agency, he was thought of as “that wise and faithful servant” (Matt. 24:45-47) who by Divine supervision had been placed upon the antitypical watch post and tower. Hence it was he who was privileged to “write down the vision and make it plain upon tables.” His writings, and especially the illuminating “Chart of the Ages,” proved to be a veritable key for unlocking the Bible and depicting God’s loving Plan of Salvation.

In commenting on this text in Habakkuk early in 1914, the Pastor intimated that it could have a bearing on events expected later that year. He wrote:

“God’s plan of the ages is the vision seen by the Prophet Habakkuk, who was told to write it and to ‘make it plain upon tables, that every one may read it fluently’ (Leeser’s translation); that in the end the vision should ‘speak and not lie;’ though it would seem

to tarry, yet it would not tarry. It would seem to all that the great plan of God was long delayed. The groaning creation would think the Heavenly Father was very slack ... We know that disappointments have come to God's people along this line [an apparent reference to the Millerite disappointment in 1844] ...

"This vision is to be made clear at the appointed time. We may not read the time features with the same absolute certainty as doctrinal features; for time is not so definitely stated in the Scriptures as are the basic doctrines. We are still walking by faith and not by sight. We are, however, not faithless and unbelieving, but faithful and waiting.

"If later it should be demonstrated that the church is not glorified by October, 1914, we shall try to feel content with whatever the Lord's will may be ... If in the Lord's providence the time should come twenty-five years later, then that would be our will ...

"Our expectation as a church is that our change is near ... We are not infallible ... but [the signs of the times seem to corroborate] that we are in the dawning of the new age. But just how far along we are we do not positively know. We are waiting for the Sun of Righteousness to appear."⁶³

Of special note in Habakkuk's prophecy is the reference to an apparent time delay with respect to the fulfillment of the vision: "Though it tarry, wait for it." Hence, there seemed to be an advance indication that the full establishment of the Kingdom would not be as smooth and rapid as had been thought and that there would be the appearance of a delay in its implementation. As such, the prophecy offered a message of assurance and a gentle word of advice: The vision is certain, it will yet be fulfilled in due time; therefore, wait patiently for it.

Many in the Bible Student fellowship could take heart as they applied Habakkuk's prophecy to the time error that had been made with respect to the fulfillment of the vision. The expectation that the church would be glorified before the ending of "Gentile Times" in

1914 turned out to be an honest deduction, but a conclusion not warranted by clear Scripture. More time would be required for the nations to be evicted and for related end-of-the-age prophecies to be fulfilled before this blessed event could occur.

As the Lord's spokesman upon the spiritual watch post, Pastor Russell had provided the early preview of coming world events. His descriptions of the "Day of the Lord," the restoration of Israel and the "Battle of Armageddon" were vivid and meaningful, and the signs of the times seemed to validate the nearness of the Kingdom to follow. The new day in earth's history evidently had already arrived and pointed to the near fulfillment of Kingdom hopes as the logical follow-through. However, in hindsight, the situation could be likened to an alarm clock that had been set for the early morning of the new day rather than for its main event—the establishment of the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, God's timetable was not altered! "[The vision] speaks of the end, and it will not deceive: though it [seem to] tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not be delayed." The Pastor was able to acknowledge that a human error had been made and he gladly accepted the Lord's will in the matter. On the plus side, he could see the good that had resulted in the sanctifying effect upon the Lord's people and the tremendous boost to zealous service it had prompted.

Now it was continued faith in the promises that mattered, appreciation for added privileges of spreading the Truth, and a redoubling of efforts to serve the Lord while there was yet time. In a final comment on Habakkuk's vision at a convention session held in Oakland, California in July 1915, the Pastor responded to a question by saying in part:

"[This] great vision ... is a picture, so to speak ... The most important part of the picture was that Messiah would come, and that he would set up his kingdom ... Its fulfillment would seem to tarry long ...

" 'But,' declares the Prophet, 'it will surely come; it will not tarry.' It does not really tarry. There might be various times when we would expect to see more than we do see. We may have expected to see more of the

trouble upon the world before this. The year 1915 is now more than half gone, and I think it very doubtful whether we shall see all we had expected in this year. It looks as though we were trying to hasten the fulfilment of the vision.

“But the vision is still for an appointed time; and we are not to give it up. We trust ourselves to God’s arrangement ... The vision is sure.”⁶⁴

Endnotes: Chapter 6

1. *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly* (hereafter cited as *Overland*), “Our Lord’s Return” (hereafter cited as “Return”), p. 222.
2. *Overland*, “The Divine Program—Messiah’s Second Coming” (hereafter cited as “Second Coming”), p. 57.
3. *Overland*, “Second Coming,” p. 55.
4. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “Truth Wounded in the House of Its Friends,” Mar. 15, 1902, p. 2972.
5. *Reprints*, “He Ascended, Leading Captives,” Jan. 1, 1916, pp. 5829-5830.
6. *Reprints*, “Where He Was Before,” Dec. 1, 1914 (hereafter cited as “Before”), p. 5589.
7. *Reprints*, “Before,” p. 5589. See also C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 103-172, for a more extensive treatment of the entire subject of the manner of our Lord’s return and appearing.
8. *Overland*, “Return,” p. 222.
9. *Reprints*, “The Parousia of Our Lord Jesus and His Subsequent Apokalupsis and Epiphania at His Second Advent,” Mar. 15, 1902 (hereafter cited as “Parousia, Apokalupsis and Epiphania”), pp. 2975-2978. See also Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 173-247, for a more complete discussion of the Jubilees and the Parallel Dispensations; and Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 61-94, 121-134, for the time prophecies of Daniel and related proofs incident to the time aspect of Christ’s second advent.

10. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 159-160. See also Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, pp. 563-614.
11. Joseph B. Rotherham, *The Emphasized New Testament*, Appended Notes, p. 271.
12. *Reprints*, “Parousia, Apokalupsis and Epiphania,” p. 2979.
13. *Reprints*, “Views From the Tower,” Dec. 15, 1895, p. 1903.
14. *Overland*, “The Battle of Armageddon” (hereafter cited as “Armageddon”), p. 269.
15. *Overland*, “Imminence of Christ’s Kingdom,” p. 324.
16. Russell, *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (hereafter cited as *Divine Plan*), p. 307.
17. *Overland*, “The Divine Program—The Great Day of His Wrath” (hereafter cited as “Great Day”), p. 58.
18. *Overland*, “Great Day,” p. 58.
19. *Pastor Russell’s Sermons* (hereafter cited as *Sermons*), “The Vessels of a Potter,” p. 717.
20. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 334-335.
21. *Reprints*, “Making Ready for the Reign of Righteousness,” Nov. 1, 1914, pp. 5566-5567.
22. *Overland*, “Financial, Ecclesiastical and Social Shakings,” p. 336.
23. *Overland*, “Great Day,” p. 60.
24. Russell, *Divine Plan*, p. 309.
25. *Overland*, “Return,” p. 228.
26. *Overland*, “Armageddon,” p. 270; and Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, p. v.
27. *Overland*, “Armageddon,” pp. 273-274; and Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, pp. xii-xiv.
28. *Overland*, “Armageddon,” p. 274; and Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, p. xiv.
29. Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, pp. ii and xviii-xix.
30. Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, pp. 96-97, 102-104.
31. Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, p. 521.
32. *Reprints*, “This Honor Have All His Saints,” Nov. 15, 1915, p. 5804.
33. *Overland*, “The True Church,” p. 287.
34. *Reprints*, “Politicians and False Religion,” July 15, 1915, p. 5733.

35. *Sermons*, "The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven," p. 424.
36. *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," p. 108.
37. *Jews in the News*, [exact date unknown; probably in late 1950s or early 1960s].
38. *Sermons*, "Zionism in Prophecy," p. 481.
39. *Sermons*, "Zionism in Prophecy," p. 482.
40. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 244.
41. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, p. 244.
42. James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, "Captivity" (shebûwth), Hebrew dictionary #7622, p. 111.
43. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 213-233; *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," pp. 73-78.
44. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 73-98; *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," pp. 79-83.
45. *Reprints*, "The Day of the Lord," Sept. 1879, p. 26.
46. *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," p. 116.
47. *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," p. 120.
48. *Overland*, "God's Chosen People," pp. 70, 116.
49. *Overland*, "The Church Militant's Surrender to the Church Triumphant," p. 190.
50. *Sermons*, "Nearing the Desired Haven of Rest," pp. 739-740.
51. *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, pp. 134-135; see also Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 73-98, for his detailed understanding of this matter.
52. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 76-77.
53. *Reprints*, "Resume of the Ending of the Times of the Gentiles," Oct. 15, 1913, p. 5329; "What Course Should We Take?," Nov. 15, 1913, pp. 5348-5350; "Views from the Watch Tower," Jan. 1, 1914, p. 5373; "Views from the Watch Tower," May 1, 1914 (hereafter cited as "Views"), p. 5449; *What Pastor Russell Said*, p. 90.
54. *What Pastor Russell Said*, pp. 85-86, 88-90, 99; *Reprints*, "Views," p. 5449.
55. *Reprints*, "Making Ready for the Reign of Righteousness," Nov. 1, 1914 (hereafter cited as "Making Ready"), p. 5568.
56. *Reprints*, "Making Ready," p. 5569.
57. *Reprints*, "Changes in 'Scripture Studies,'" Mar. 1, 1915, p. 5649.

58. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, Author's Foreword, p. x.
59. *Reprints*, "Typical Experiences of Elijah and Elisha," Feb. 1, 1916, pp. 5844-5845.
60. *Reprints*, "The Harvest Is Not Ended," Sept. 1, 1916, p. 5951.
61. *Reprints*, "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1915," Dec. 15, 1915, pp. 5813-5814.
62. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment on Hebrews 10:37 as follows: "In Habakkuk, it is **the vision** that is said to be about to come. **Christ**, being the grand and ultimate subject of all prophetic vision, is here made by Paul, under inspiration, the subject of the Spirit's prophecy by Habakkuk, in its final and exhaustive fulfillment." (Vol. 2 of *Commentary*, pp. 469-470)
63. *Reprints*, "The Days Are at Hand," Jan. 1, 1914, pp. 5374-5375.
64. *Reprints*, "Question Meeting—Oakland Convention," July 15, 1915, p. 5731.

PART THREE:

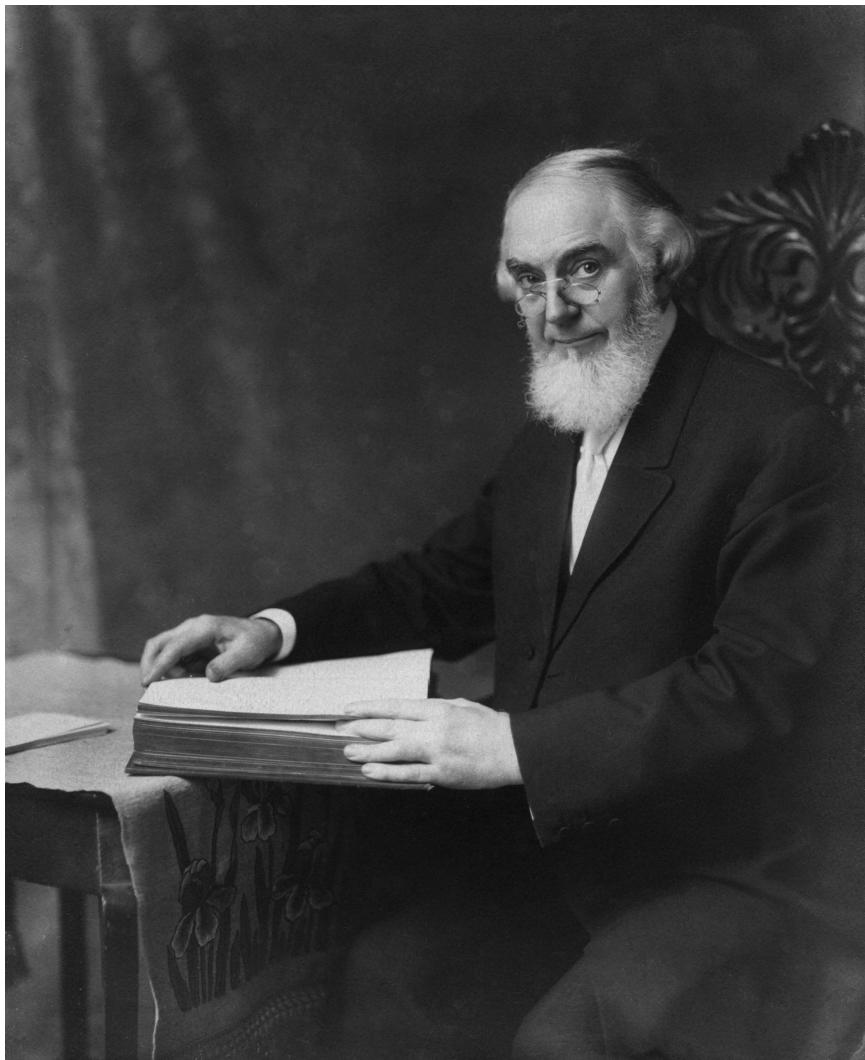
QUELLING SLANDEROUS ATTACKS

“Beloved, as sojourners and temporary residents,
I appeal to you to abstain from the desires of your lower natures,
Which are always at war with your souls.
Bear yourselves uprightly before the people with whom you live;
So that, for all their slander of you as evil-doers,
They may from your good deeds witness your character,
And glorify God on the day of visitation.”

—1 Peter 2:11, 12 (composite translation)

“Behold, the man clothed with linen,
Which had the [writer’s] inkhorn by his side,
Reported the matter, saying,
I have done as thou hast commanded me.”

—Ezekiel 9:11



The Pastor Looking Up from the Bible (1911)

Though fully devoted to serving God and exemplifying Christian character in his own life, the Pastor became the subject of a wide range of controversial charges.

7

Charges in the Pastor's Day

PASTOR Russell enjoyed a distinguished career as author, preacher, syndicated columnist and founder of the Bible Student movement, and yet it was not without turbulence and strife. For one who had created such a stir in the public arena and amongst his religious contemporaries, perhaps it is only to be expected that animosities as well as adulations would have resulted. Let us now turn our attention to some of the controversies that arose, in order to obtain a balanced picture of the life and times of the Pastor.

We have already seen how a majority of the clergy had become bitterly opposed to his ministry almost from the start for a variety of reasons—including what they perceived as a threat to their very existence. Every opportunity was seized upon to discredit the Pastor and his work. When personal attacks upon the man and his morality were found to catch the public eye even more than criticisms of his teachings, these became more frequent and concerted.

This chapter will be devoted to examining the crux of the charges brought against the Pastor in his lifetime, and an effort will be made to evaluate their validity. At issue here is the basic character and integrity of Pastor Russell: Was he a man of high Christian attributes, worthy of his position as a messenger of God on the

religious scene in America, or was he but a charlatan and pretender with evil designs?

At the same time, what can be said of the sometimes unsavory tactics employed by his foes—mainly the clergy and certain newspapers? Was their opposition motivated by pure principle and conviction, or was it based more on mundane matters of worldly gain and prestige? Hence, another intensely interesting saga in the life of the Pastor will be opening here.

We leave it for our readers to examine the facts, to consider the accusations in an informed manner and to arrive at their own conclusions. Let us begin first with the perjury charge.

A Proven Perjurer?

In 1912, a Baptist preacher, J. J. Ross of the James Street Baptist Church in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, published a denunciatory pamphlet about Pastor Russell, entitled *Some Facts About the Self-styled "Pastor" Charles T. Russell*. In it, he attacked Pastor Russell's teachings as "the destructive doctrines of one man who is neither a scholar nor a theologian." He further denounced the Pastor's entire belief system as "anti-rational, anti-scientific, anti-Biblical, anti-Christian, and a deplorable perversion of the gospel." And finally, he attacked the Pastor personally, questioning his qualifications as a minister and even his moral character.¹

Recognizing the insidious damage such an assault could do to his ministry and the spreading of the Truth message, Pastor Russell filed suit for defamatory libel. A trial was held the following year (March 17, 1913) in the Hamilton Court in Canada. The Rev. Ross did not appear himself but engaged George Lynch-Staunton, Canada's foremost criminal lawyer, as his chief attorney to defend him. Due to the Pastor's prominence in the United States and Canada, the trial aroused considerable interest and was covered in detail by the local paper, the *Hamilton Spectator*. In due course, the lower court found the Rev. Ross guilty of libel, but, as discussed later, the verdict was thrown out on appeal due to a legal technicality that had no bearing on the merits of the case.²

Despite these facts, the enemies of Pastor Russell have found the trial useful as a means of defaming his reputation because of

certain remarks he made under cross-examination. His critics argue that the dialogue shows unmistakably that the Pastor had perjured himself under oath and thus revealed the “shady” side of his character. The matter is somewhat complicated by the unexplained absence of an official transcript of the court proceedings and by somewhat different versions of what actually occurred.³ Nevertheless, from newspaper accounts and the statements of witnesses present at the trial, it is possible to reconstruct what actually transpired and to evaluate its characterization as perjury.

The controversy centers on the exact dialogue between the chief defense attorney Mr. Staunton and Pastor Russell when the matter of the Pastor's familiarity with ancient languages was brought up. Regarding Hebrew and Latin, the Pastor stated “he was versed in Latin terms [only] to a certain extent.”⁴ When asked, “You don't profess, then, to be schooled in the Latin language?” he replied, “No, sir;” and to, “Or in Greek?,” “No, sir.”⁵

Regarding the Greek language [or alphabet—there are different versions of what Staunton actually asked], the Pastor affirmed that he knew some of it, but might make a mistake on some of the letters. When handed a Greek book and asked to read off specific letters on a certain page, he stated, “I don't know that I would be able to.” The exchange ended with the Pastor's reply of “No” to the question of his being “familiar” with the Greek language.⁶ When the Pastor attempted to explain how he used lexicons and concordances to assist him in understanding the meaning of these ancient languages of the Bible, he was prevented from doing so.⁷

As far as the Pastor's detractors are concerned, this is the entire critical dialogue to prove that he committed perjury in the cross-examination. Over and over again, the charge is repeated in numerous articles and books written against the Pastor. Each writer seemingly attempts to outdo the other in exaggerating the facts and emphasizing the importance of the “perjury” charge. Martin and Klann in their work are typical:

“ ‘Pastor’ Russell had at last made a serious mistake. He had testified under oath before Almighty God, and had sworn to tell ‘the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.’ He was soon to regret his testimony and stand convicted [?] as a perjurer ...

“Here is conclusive evidence, the ‘Pastor’ under oath perjured himself beyond question. [?] Can one sincerely trust the teachings of such a man who thought nothing of such evidence? ...

“This is no ‘religionist scheme’ to ‘smear’ the ‘Pastor’s’ image; we offer it as open proof [?] of their founder’s inherent dishonesty and lack of morals, that they may see the type of man to whose doctrines they have committed their eternal souls.”⁸

Since the “perjury” charge is considered basic to the overall indictment leveled at the Pastor, it is essential that this accusation be carefully weighed. To this day a majority of the critics attempt to give the impression that the Pastor first affirmed a knowledge of the Greek language, then was embarrassed by being unable to read specific letters when called upon to do so. However, this view is simply not in accord with the facts: As noted, Pastor Russell began the exchange with attorney Staunton by clearly stating that he was not “schooled” in the Greek, nor “familiar” with the Greek language. The only familiarity he had acknowledged was with certain letters of the alphabet. His inability to read Greek or to recognize all the letters of the alphabet in no way contradicted his earlier statements.

That this is the correct representation of what took place is confirmed by every available source—unbiased witnesses originally in attendance at the trial, the local newspaper coverage of the event, and even by the silence of the defendant’s own attorneys! None of these made any mention of a perjury claim at the time of the original trial. Note these points:

1. The *Hamilton Spectator* March 17, 1913 account for the day of the hearing, which includes the portion on the Greek language, significantly is silent of any perjury claim.⁹
2. No perjury charge was laid against Pastor Russell, either by the court or by the defendant’s attorneys, including Mr. Staunton, the chief counsel who had carried out the line of questioning.¹⁰
3. No eyewitnesses to the original trial have ever stated that perjury had been committed.¹¹

Therefore, since there is no record of a perjury charge being raised and no valid basis for such to be made, the question arises as to its original source. It turns out to be none other than the defendant in the case, the Rev. J. J. Ross, who conjured up the charge in a follow-up booklet further defaming the Pastor, entitled, *Some Facts and More Facts About the Self-styled "Pastor" Charles T. Russell*. He stated, "We charge him with perjury, or wilfully making a false oath."¹² Yet no substantiation for the charge was given, since there was none that could be offered. He dared not state that the court had confirmed such a charge, nor even that his own attorneys had claimed such, since neither was true.

M. James Penton, in a scholarly work partly devoted to reviewing the early days of the Bible Student movement, specifically comments on this issue. He observes in respect to the charge of perjury against Pastor Russell, "which has been repeated and believed time and again," that it was the Rev. J. J. Ross himself who initiated the charge. Then, in candid terms, he states:

"Yet it was Ross, not Russell, who bore false witness. In a pamphlet published after Russell's criminal action against him, Ross misquoted his lawyer [to give the impression that Russell had lied under oath regarding his knowledge of Greek] ... Ross therefore distorted the truth."¹³

It is remarkable that in the booklet the Rev. Ross gave the impression to his readers that he himself was present at the trial, calling the information he gave "first hand knowledge."¹⁴ In fact, he was not present for any part of it, having wilfully refused to appear to prove his charges against Pastor Russell. Further, it was only by clever legal maneuvering by the defendant's chief counsel, George Lynch-Staunton, that Pastor Russell's lawyer, S. F. Washington, was prevented from serving the Rev. Ross with a subpoena. This fact was so apparent that the local Ontario paper covering the trial ran an amusing caricature of the Rev. Ross running away in haste with the caption, "He who runs away learns to fight some other day." It turned out that he had fled all the way to Western Canada to be as far from the trial as he could comfortably go!¹⁵

Hence, in reviewing all the facts pertaining to the charge of “perjury” against Pastor Russell, it may be seen that it was merely a figment of one person’s imagination—part of a clever ploy to injure the reputation of a respected figure of his day. It seems evident that the facts of the case clearly refute the accusation, and it should be identified as a hoax and a slanderous charge emanating from someone with malicious intent.

THE PASTOR’S REBUTTAL. Pastor Russell made up for not being allowed to express himself fully at the court trial by addressing the issue in the columns of his own publication. On the matter of his formal education in Greek and Hebrew and the use of these languages in his Bible studies, he wrote:

“As respects my education in Greek and Hebrew: Not only do I not claim very special knowledge of either language, but I claim that not one minister in a thousand is either a Hebrew or a Greek scholar. To be able to spell out a few Greek words is of no earthly value.

“Nor is it necessary longer to study these languages, in order to have knowledge of the Bible. Our Presbyterian friends have gotten out at great cost Young’s Analytical Hebrew, Chaldaic, Greek and English Lexicon Concordance, which anyone may procure. And our Methodist friends have issued a similar work—Strong’s Analytical Concordance and Lexicon. And there is a still older one entitled Englishman’s Hebrew, Chaldaic, Greek and English Lexicon and Concordance. Additionally, Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon is a standard authority. The prices of these are not beyond the reach of the average man. By these works scholarly information respecting the original text of the Bible is obtainable. I have all four of these works and have used them faithfully. Very few of college professors, even, would risk to give a critical translation of any text of Scripture without consulting these very works of reference, which are standard. To merely learn to read the Greek and Hebrew without a six years’ course in their grammars is more likely to hinder than to help in Bible study; far better [to] take the acknowledged scholarship to which I have referred.”¹⁶

On the outcome of the trial, the Pastor commented:

“In Canada they have just two laws governing libel. Under the one the falsifier may be punished by the assessment of damage and money. Under the other, criminal libel, he is subject to imprisonment. I entered the suit against Rev. Ross under the criminal act, at the advice of my attorneys, because, as he has no property, a suit for damages would not intimidate him nor stop him. The lower Court found him guilty of libel. But when the case went to the second Judge he called up an English precedent, in which it was held that criminal libel would only operate in a case where the jury felt sure that there was danger of rioting or violence. As there was no danger that myself or friends would resort to rioting, the case was thrown out. I could still bring my action for financial damages, but it would be costly to me and impotent as respects Rev. Ross.”¹⁷

REFLECTIONS. Through the years, the “perjury” charge has been the most frequent and often quoted criticism of Pastor Russell in a wide-ranging list of accusations against him. Obviously its continued repetition by the clergy indicates their agreement with Rev. Ross as to the value of this particular charge even though it is not a difficult matter to show that it is entirely without foundation. To be required to drop the allegation of “a proven perjurer under oath” would evidently seem too much for his enemies to bear and would eliminate the single most stinging part of their indictment.

This prompts our first observation: If this charge is the most damaging of all the evidence against the character and teaching of Pastor Russell, it is well to ponder the credibility of the attack. After years of meticulous scrutiny of the long and illustrious career of the Pastor, is this the most blameworthy act that his critics can come up with? If this bears out in our continuing investigation, it would certainly demonstrate the shallow nature of the widely-circulated charges and cause us to suspect the entire defamation effort. We may well question if all the hoopla is not really a united effort on the part of the clergy to malign the reputation of a respected man of God whose zealous work and enlightening teachings they have been unable to refute on a scholarly and Biblical level.

We should also be reminded that on legal grounds the lower court had ruled in the Pastor's favor and found that it was indeed the Rev. Ross who was guilty of libel as charged. On appeal, it was overturned but not in the sense of having been denied by a jury; rather it was lost merely on grounds of an obscure technicality that Ross' chief attorney, George Lynch-Staunton had been able to cite. As Canada's foremost criminal lawyer of the time, he was credited with defending and securing the release of several alleged murderers and apparently was able to get the Rev. Ross "off the hook" without too much difficulty.¹⁸ Unfortunately, far too often justice is forced to take a back seat to the maneuvering of a clever attorney who knows how to manipulate the system.

Finally, we cannot help but notice the adroit maneuvering of Rev. Ross' chief counsel which prevented his client from being served with a subpoena; and the hastily arranged trip to a distant Canadian province. Why such finessing to avoid a court appearance and the opportunity it would afford to further the reverend's attack upon a supposed religious charlatan? Researcher Ditlieb Felderer suggests two possible explanations:

If the Rev. Ross had testified at the trial, it would have subjected him to cross examination in the same manner as the Pastor had been. This would have permitted the Pastor's attorney, S. F. Washington, to delve into the Rev. Ross' own scholastic qualifications, including his formal training in Greek and Hebrew, which might have exposed serious insufficiencies in this area. Further, cross examination would have revealed that the Rev. Ross was not a graduate of a prestigious theological seminary as might be supposed for the representative of the clergy leading the attack upon Pastor Russell. Even more shocking, the outspoken clergyman did not possess an earned degree from any school of higher learning as would be assumed. His Doctor of Divinity degree was honorary, and not granted until 1913 (the very year of the libel trial) by Northern Baptist Seminary.¹⁹ As we shall shortly see, it was the lack of higher schooling that formed another basic line of attack against the Pastor, and such disclosures concerning Rev. Ross would doubtless have proved very embarrassing to him.

The Rev. Ross' absence from the trial solved another dilemma for him. Pastor Russell was well known for his mental acumen, wit,

and deep knowledge of the Bible. Undoubtedly the Rev. Ross felt himself no match for the Pastor and under no circumstances would he have wanted to be drawn into debate with him or be forced to face him personally. Hence, a plan was contrived and a way out determined by his counselors, but, as we have already seen, the fact did not escape the notice of the local paper and was treated in humorous style.

Lacking Proper Credentials?

Another favorite tactic employed from the onset by Pastor Russell's critics was to question his academic qualifications and emphasize his lack of orthodox-style ordination. Precocious and studious as a child, Charles Russell had been given the benefit of private tutoring, but he had never attended college, graduated from a seminary, or been formally ordained by an accredited religious body.

On the surface, these may seem like imposing indictments, but are they really valid? Or are they resorted to merely as efforts to belittle the Pastor and place him in an unfavorable light? Let us see.

It turns out that the individual most responsible for pressing this line of attack was the same Rev. J. J. Ross of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, whom we met previously. Already in his first booklet against the Pastor, Rev. Ross wrote:

“He [Pastor Russell] never attended the higher schools of learning [college, university or seminary], knows comparatively nothing of philosophy, systematic or historical theology, and is totally ignorant of the dead languages.”²⁰

A small pamphlet distributed by the Moody Bible Institute, written by William Kneedler, carried on the same theme: “Born in 1852, Russell was not educated beyond the seventh grade, had no theological training, and did not know Greek or Hebrew.”²¹ Many contemporary critics have followed their lead in a similar line of attack.

In our modern day of compulsory primary and secondary education, and widespread opportunities for higher learning, such an indictment at first glance seems imposing. Yet when we stop to consider the level of education that prevailed in the historical setting of

Pastor Russell's day, the matter takes on an entirely different perspective. It was commonplace even in America not to graduate from high school in the 1860s, and colleges and universities were strictly for the elite.

Statistically, the contrast in educational achievement between those early years and the present day is quite remarkable. Before 1900, fewer than one American in a thousand (at age twenty-three) had earned a college degree. By the year 1970, this had risen to 223 persons per thousand.²² In 1870, only 1.1 per cent of Americans from ages eighteen to twenty-four years were enrolled in colleges or universities. A hundred years later, in 1970, 32.1 per cent had matriculated in a degree-credit program in such a school of higher learning.²³ In another comparison, in 1872 a total of only fourteen doctorate degrees were awarded to those pursuing advanced degrees in the United States. By 1970, this number had risen to 29,866 per year.²⁴ Hence, in Pastor Russell's day it was simply not to be expected that even prominent leaders in various fields would necessarily have had the benefit of professional training and advanced degrees.

Further, particularly in the religious realm during that early period, educational requirements were not considered vital. It was not uncommon for prominent evangelists and leaders to lack such training or fail to hold any theological degrees whatever. Their power in the pulpit was evident and they were not criticized for any scholastic deficiencies. Similarly, though Pastor Russell may not have had orthodox-style seminary training, he obviously showed no evidence of lack of Bible knowledge. Even his foes acknowledged his exceptional preaching abilities and his prolific writing talents in expounding the Word of God.

Researcher Ditlieb Felderer further points out that the quality of the religious training institutions of Pastor Russell's day was very lacking as compared to modern standards. He writes, "In our so-called high sophisticated world, few people are aware of how poorly and how limited Bible education was in Russell's time ..."²⁵ He then quotes from Clarence Mason's work on the history of the Philadelphia College of the Bible, which happens to be the very institution that published Rev. Ross' booklet against Pastor Russell:

“To those of us brought up amid a multitude of Bible conferences and Bible Schools, it is hard to realize that these two handmaiden movements of God are of relatively recent origin. In 1880 there was not a single Bible school in America. Nor was there a single Bible conference which was sure it would ever meet again, or if it did, where.

“True, Charles Haddon Spurgeon had founded Pastors College in 1861, and H. Grattan Guinness had organized the ‘Harley House’ Bible Training Institute in 1872. These were the first so-called Bible schools. But they were in Britain, not America. Actually, the spectacular growth of the Bible school and Bible conference movement that was to come became largely an American phenomenon.”²⁶

Pastor Russell's ordination and calling of God to the ministry are also frequently questioned by his opponents. During the Russell-Ross libel trial mentioned earlier, a concentrated effort was made to belittle his qualifications as a pastor and Bible teacher. His foes were particularly angered when the Pastor claimed “ordination” according to the Bible usage, yet could not substantiate orthodox ordination by an “accredited” bishop, clergyman, presbytery or other human council. His sincere “Yes” answer to the question of his ordination and “No” to that of receiving such status from a recognized religious hierarchy was later distorted to mean that he had lied under oath.²⁷

This second charge of perjury can again be traced to none other than the Pastor's arch foe, the Rev. J. J. Ross. To the credit of the clergy as a whole, only a few were persuaded to echo his claim. Again, this allegation and the entire defamation attempt fall flat when the facts are brought to bear. As indicated by the *Hamilton Spectator* account of the Ross trial, there was never a perjury charge raised against the Pastor on the ordination question or anything else, either by the court or by Ross' own attorneys. An eyewitness to the trial reported it was commonly understood that Pastor Russell in his testimony was referring, not to any human form of authorization or ceremony, but to the larger, Biblical view of ordination.²⁸

Pastor Russell firmly believed that the calling and anointing for the ministry stem from God alone. It was a view that was shared by many of the denominations of that day. For example, John Gill, considered one of the greatest Baptist teachers on systematic theology, in his work, *A Body of Divinity*, expressly laid out much that was similar to the Pastor's belief. He pointed out that in the early church one who was called of God for the ministry was installed in office not by the imposition or "laying on" of hands of an established hierarchy, but simply by the "stretching out" of hands of the members of the local church congregation.²⁹ The entire procedure amounted to an exercise of the democratic prerogative of the assembly, collectively seeking to determine the will of God, by voting for those "elders" or "evangelists" who were deemed qualified for such a ministry. And this was the exact method by which the Pastor had been ordained by his local congregation!

Once again the facts may be seen to demonstrate that the ordination charges against the Pastor were cleverly manufactured to discredit him before the public. Some lay people would not be aware of the wide divergence in ordination practices among the various denominations and few would be acquainted with the original custom of the early church. And thus we see how the case for clergy misrepresentation and for plotting against the Pastor continues to build.

THE PASTOR'S COMMENTS. Pastor Russell went on record to reply formally to his critics regarding his education and ordination for the ministry. Writing in the columns of his periodical, he commented as follows:

"And as for how I got my education—it seems to me of little consequence. I have enough to serve my own purposes, and, apparently, too much to please Rev. Ross and others of his type, who, not knowing how to meet my theological teachings, do not attempt to do so at all, but merely charge me with ignorance. As I read his vile slanders I thought of what the New Testament says about St. Peter and St. John. They were so woefully ignorant that all the people perceived that they were 'unlearned and ignorant men.' If they were living today, I suppose that the Rev. Ross and Co.

would be after them to show them up as not having been ordained by the Baptists and not knowing anything anyway ...

"I need not tell you how absurdly untrue Rev. Ross's statements are in respect to my ordination; but really it seems strange how little people use their thinking faculties in such matters—how few who would read the Rev. Ross's statements would see their absurdity.

"For instance, he is a Baptist and was authorized or ordained by the Baptists—not by Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Catholics or Episcopalians. Would an Episcopalian recognize Rev. Ross's ordination? Surely not! Would a Roman Catholic recognize his ordination? Of course not. Ordination merely means authorization. The Catholics will authorize, or ordain, those only who belong to their faith. The Baptists will ordain, or authorize, those only who are Baptists. How foolish, then, to talk about ordination from their standpoint!

"But ordination from my standpoint, the Bible standpoint, the standpoint of an increasing number of Bible students all the world over, is different. It is a divine ordination."³⁰

A year later (1915) the Pastor elaborated further on his view of ordination and defined it as consisting of two parts:

"From what we believe to be the Bible standpoint, there are two ordinations proper. One is of God; one of men. The ordination of God is the begetting of the holy Spirit. Without this no one is authorized to preach the Gospel. If any are preaching without this ordination they are, to our understanding, preaching without divine ordination. They are doing something that they are not authorized to do.

"Our Lord told how he was ordained to be a preacher; and the Scriptures tell us that we are to walk in his steps and to have experiences similar to his own in many respects ... He mentions his own ordination, saying, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.'

(Isaiah 61:1) As that ordination came upon Jesus, it still later came upon the disciples at Pentecost; and all down the Gospel age it has come upon the followers of Christ, anointing them to preach the Gospel.—Luke 4:17-21; 1 John 2:27

“All who have received the ordination of God have the authority to preach according to their opportunities and abilities ... There are some men who cannot preach publicly on account of lack of talent or opportunity, but all men, by their lives and conversation, can proclaim the glory and honor of the great and loving God who lifted them out of darkness into light ... and placed their feet upon a Rock and established their goings.—Psalm 40:2”³¹

He then went on to describe more fully the second part of ordination, in which the church had a distinct role:

“There comes, however, another special ordination of those who are called ministers of the Gospel, in which class I count myself. This is ordination by the church, and is recognized by all denominations everywhere. By some it is considered a mere form, by some it is performed with great ceremony, by others with less ceremony. But to our understanding, each congregation should have those whom it has chosen ordained in a Scriptural way—by the stretching forth of hands—by a vote.

“The form of the statement in Acts 14:23 [‘ordained ... elders in every church’], with other frequent references to elders in connection with all churches, justifies the inference that ordination was the invariable custom in the early church. The term ‘elders,’ as seen in this text, includes evangelists, pastors, teachers, and prophets—public exponents. Hence it is important that we learn what is meant by the word ‘ordained.’

“At the present time the word ordination is generally used in reference to a ceremony of installation; but this is not the significance of the Greek word *cheirotoneo*, used in this text. It means ‘to elect by stretching out the hand,’ still the usual form of voting. This definition is given in Professor Young’s *Analytical Concordance*

to the Bible. As this may be considered a Presbyterian authority, we give also the definition set forth in Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, which may be considered a Methodist authority. The latter defines the root of the word—'A hand-reacher, or voter (by raising the hand).'

"The Scriptural method of ordaining elders in all the churches is by congregational election—by stretching forth the hand in a vote. To insist upon such an election before serving is to follow Scriptural order; it fortifies the elder, and, additionally, reminds the congregation of its duties and responsibilities as appointees of the elders in the Lord's name and Spirit—as expressing God's choice, God's will ...

"Whoever has not been ordained in these two ways is not an ordained minister of the Gospel in the Scriptural sense. First, the divine ordination is necessary; second, the earthly ordination is necessary. By the grace of God I have both of these."³²

REFLECTIONS. It is a sad commentary to note the hypocritical nature of the attacks against the Pastor and their lack of substance when subjected to careful analysis. Instead of marveling at the outstanding success of a dedicated individual able to rise to public prominence without the advantage of wealthy parentage or formal education, a united effort is made to do just the opposite—to use the facts in a disparaging and belittling manner. Yet such a negative approach is used only against the Pastor and conveniently is not directed against fellow members of the orthodox evangelical community.

Why, for example, is nothing said about Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), a contemporary of Pastor Russell, well known evangelist, organizer of religious conferences and founder of the Bible institute that bears his name? (This was the same institute, incidentally, that published Kneedler's scathing denunciation of the Pastor's supposed scholastic insufficiencies, as we have already noted.) Dwight Moody himself attained no greater level of formal schooling than the Pastor, dropping out at age thirteen to seek employment as a clerk in his uncle's shoe store. He was without seminary training

and was never ordained.³³ Yet not one word of criticism is to be heard!

“Billy” Sunday (William A. Sunday, 1862-1935) is another glaring example. A high school dropout, he became a professional baseball player before beginning his evangelistic work in 1896. Sporting an unconventional style of slangy language and flamboyant manner, he rapidly became one of the most popular preachers of his time. Yet he was not formally licensed to preach until 1898 by the Chicago Presbytery, and not until 1903 was he formally ordained—and then only by having the standard examination waived!³⁴ Hence, it would seem that educational requirements and ordination protocol could be disregarded at will for those deemed to be in orthodox theological standing.

Additional examples along these lines could also be cited. When the facts are laid out in this manner, a clear pattern respecting the attitude of the clergy toward Pastor Russell begins to emerge. More and more, we are concerned over what appear to be the markings of a conspiracy against him. Earlier we saw how a concerted effort was made to belittle his dynamic ministry and to ignore the notable contributions he was making in the religious field in America. Now it is becoming increasingly evident that no effort was spared in finding ways to discredit or misrepresent this man of God, even though the means used to do so were largely hypocritical or based on distortions and misleading statements. But let us go further in this examination of the major charges brought against the Pastor.

Fraudulently Selling “Miracle Wheat”?

Shortly after the turn of the century, press reports of “Miracle Wheat” began to attract Pastor Russell’s attention. It seems that a Virginia farmer, K. B. Stoner of Fincastle, had accidentally discovered an unusually vigorous strain of wheat growing among his regular crop. He was quoted as saying that subsequent sowings of the wheat produced an average yield of fifty-six bushels to the acre, compared to a normal seventeen bushels (more than three times greater yield). Even more amazing was the fact that, instead of the usual one-to-eight ratio of seed to crop, Mr. Stoner realized about seventy-five bushels for each bushel of seed (a ratio of one to seventy-five, or about nine times as much).³⁵

In 1907, a U. S. Assistant Agriculturist, Mr. H. A. Miller, had been sent to examine the wheat. His report stated that “field conditions (for) the last two years (gave) excellent results. The yield has been from two to three times the yield of other varieties grown on the farm under the same conditions of culture, except the rate of seeding” (which was four times less per acre than for regular wheat). “Milling tests have been made of this wheat, and its quality seems to be as good as, if not superior to, other varieties of winter wheat.”³⁶

Pastor Russell was so impressed with these reports that in 1908 he began quoting from them in the *Watch Tower* magazine under the current events section.³⁷ He considered it a corroborative sign that “in this natural way God is preparing for the Millennium when ‘the earth shall yield her increase’.”³⁸ Earlier he had written, “If this account be but one-half true, it testifies afresh to God’s ability to provide things needful for the ‘times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.’—Acts 3:19-21”³⁹

In 1910, J. A. Bohnet, a Bible Student farmer who had been given a peck of the “Miracle Wheat,” wrote Pastor Russell that he had planted the grains and gradually accumulated a larger seed crop. He now desired to distribute the seeds and wanted the first opportunity for obtaining them to go to *Watch Tower* readers. He said he would sell it for the nominal price of one dollar per pound, including postage, and give the entire proceeds to the Watch Tower Society. Orders for the wheat were to be addressed to him as “Miracle Wheat Bohnet,” to maintain a clear separation from other Society mail. His instructions were to sow the wheat “one-fourth as thick as common wheat.” Further, that “it should produce from ten to fifteen times as much proportionately to the amount sown.”⁴⁰

The asking price of one dollar per pound was actually less than that charged by the original discoverer of the wheat, Mr. K. B. Stoner of Virginia, who until late in 1911 had asked for \$1.25 per pound. But suddenly in September of that year, Mr. Stoner dropped his price to \$5.00 per bushel, well under that requested in the *Watch Tower* ad. This was considered sufficient excuse for a Brooklyn newspaper, the *Daily Eagle*—an ardent foe of Pastor Russell for

some time—to launch a vicious attack upon him, claiming fraud and profiteering in the offer of the seed to the *Watch Tower* subscribers.⁴¹

Evidently the paper had been waiting for just such an issue to come up so that it could discredit the Pastor and picture him as a thief and robber, masquerading in the garb of a minister of Christ. For six months, it ran a series of articles and cartoons ridiculing him, his religion and especially the “Miracle Millennial Wheat” which he had offered. This culminated on September 23, 1911 with a particularly damaging cartoon picturing him with a package in his hand labeled “Miracle Wheat”; underneath was the caption, “If Pastor Russell can get a dollar a pound for Miracle Wheat, what could he have got for Miracle stocks and bonds as a director in the old Union Bank?”⁴²

The Union Bank referred to here was located in Brooklyn, New York and had recently failed through the dishonesty of its directors. Pastor Russell had no knowledge of the bank and had never set foot inside its doors. He had never met the directors and had no financial or other dealings with them or the bank in any way. The newspaper caricature was simply a clever attempt to link the guilt of the directors with its charges against the Pastor: profiteering from the sale of the “Miracle Wheat.”⁴³ This was the last straw for Pastor Russell, who promptly sued the *Daily Eagle* for one hundred thousand dollars libel damages, and a trial commenced in 1913.

The trial caused a sensation at the time and was eagerly followed by thousands across the land in various newspaper accounts. Ostensibly it was primarily to resolve the issue of “whether or not the wheat in question was superior to ordinary wheat.” But, in the course of the trial, the Pastor’s independent religious beliefs and practices came under heavy fire.⁴⁴ The Pastor himself provided some interesting insights into the true nature of the *Daily Eagle*’s attack:

“It was in vain that my attorney sought to show the jury *The Eagle*’s malice—that it really was attacking me along religious grounds; that it had set itself as the champion of certain clerical enemies of mine, and was seeking to destroy my influence ... In the court-room sat about twenty-five of my friends, who had come

long distances at their own expense to have an opportunity to speak a word in my behalf. Through some intricacies of the law respecting evidence, these were unable to be heard in my behalf.

“Instead, the law gave *The Eagle's* attorney the privilege of saying all manner of evil against me falsely—for the sake of the doctrines of Christ, which I hold and teach. He was allowed to picture me, as *The Eagle* had done in its cartoon—as a thief and robber, masquerading in the garb of a minister of Christ. He was allowed to ridicule the ‘Miracle Wheat,’ although I had nothing whatever to do with it, nor with the naming of it ...

“He was allowed to inveigh against the fact as criminal, that I hold the office of President of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and to claim that I hold the office in some corrupt or unlawful manner, and that I misuse the Society's income in some unexplained way to my own advantage. Meantime, scores present in the court-room and thousands all over the land, would have been glad to testify that their donations have come to the Society because they have the utmost confidence in my integrity and management of its affairs ...

“The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was held up to scorn because it did not have any hospital work nor draw any revenue from taxation ... Our Society was held up to scorn also because we do not send a wagon around the city collecting groceries and provisions for the upkeep of our work; because we do not take up collections even on Sunday; because we have never solicited a penny or a dollar from anybody; and because we never have fairs, grab-bags, ‘chances’ or ‘raffles.’ Our Society was held up to scorn and ridicule because it offers its literature free to the poor, while other similar Societies charge both rich and poor for their tracts and other publications.”⁴⁵

In due course, government inspectors were called in as witnesses, who testified that in their tests the wheat in question produced 22.6 bushels per acre. Such a production rate, instead of being dramatically superior, turned out to be on the low side of expected

yields. The Pastor had earlier stated in the *Watch Tower* that it was expected to produce from twenty-two to twenty-seven bushels per acre.⁴⁶ Without being able to document independently a clear superiority of the grain, his suit against the Brooklyn *Eagle* was greatly weakened and eventually failed. The trial had received wide publicity and, no doubt, resulted in some damage to the Pastor's image, particularly since all the resources of a big city newspaper had been directed against him.

Despite the unfavorable outcome of the trial, the Pastor did not rail against those serving on the jury. He believed their verdict was made in sincerity, though not based on full knowledge of the facts. He felt the jury members probably exhibited the common fault of being more willing to believe evil and slanderous reports than to make the effort to understand the altruistic nature of his ministry. Nevertheless, in recognition that Jesus and other men of God were similarly despised and misunderstood, he remained undismayed and encouraged all his well-wishers to renewed zeal and faithfulness in the work of promulgating the Truth.⁴⁷

The following year (1914) there was an amazing sequel to the "Miracle Wheat" saga, but it occurred too late to affect the outcome of the trial: W. A. Jarrett, a Bible Student farmer in Illinois who had procured some of the seed, planted seventy acres of the grain. He wrote Pastor Russell that he "cared for it in the regular, ordinary way, and had no trouble in disposing of it to my neighbor wheat-growers last fall for seed, at two dollars per bushel ... My field yielded forty-nine bushels to the acre—more than twice the average yield of wheat in this vicinity." Further, a sample of this "Miracle Wheat" was then used to win the top prize from the state of Illinois and became its entry in the World's Fair Exhibit which convened on February 20, 1915.⁴⁸

Despite these facts, critics of Pastor Russell have attempted to make the most of his losing this sensational "Miracle Wheat" libel case. They would like to make it appear that he and the Watch Tower Society had been guilty of fraud in connection with the sale. The following description is representative of many, containing typical distortions of truth which will be analyzed subsequently:

“Russell was successful in founding a new cult, but he was a failure in his personal life. One of his projects was a little confidence game involving the sale of ‘Miracle Wheat.’ He sold the wheat at a dollar a pound, claiming it would grow five times as fast as any other brand. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* learned of the claim and published a cartoon ridiculing him. Russell sued the newspaper for libel. That was a mistake. The suit brought on a government investigation. The *Eagle* won when it was proved that ‘miracle wheat’ wasn’t even as good as ordinary wheat.”⁴⁹

Careful consideration of the facts shows that such charges are wholly without foundation. First, it is evident that Pastor Russell relied exclusively on the many legitimate claims that had been made by others for the prolific yield of the wheat. This seemed reasonable to him, as it appeared to tie in with other evidences that Restitution blessings of God’s Kingdom were at hand. Thus, the Society itself made no special claims for the wheat other than in passing on what had been reported widely regarding it.

Secondly, the financial gain realized from the wheat sale, which amounted to about eighteen hundred dollars total, was earmarked exclusively for the non-profit preaching work of the Society. Pastor Russell did not personally profit from the sale in any way. And the amount charged for the wheat—one dollar per pound—was no more than the prevailing price of ordinary wheat.⁵⁰

And finally, it should be noted that the wheat seed had been offered not by Pastor Russell but by a friend of the Society who desired the proceeds of the sale to benefit the non-profit work of the ministry. When criticism of the offer began to be received from some outsiders, the Society offered to return all moneys of those who were dissatisfied with the wheat. Though a special fund for this purpose was created and held for a period of a year, not one person requested a refund!⁵¹

REFLECTIONS. It is somewhat amusing to note how various critics of Pastor Russell have exaggerated the amounts charged for the wheat, the claims made for its productivity, and the total amount realized from the sale. With the passing of years, his antagonists have seemingly outdone each other in the effort to magnify the

issue all out of proportion, in wanton disregard of facts and fairness. Following the lead of Rev. J. J. Ross, the Pastor's original chief opponent, a Rev. Robert Mignard wrote concerning Russell that he was "a rascal, who ... fleeced his followers with 'miracle wheat' sold at an exorbitant price, which he claimed would produce fifteen times as much wheat as an ordinary bushel." (But even the original *Eagle* article was content with stating the claim at five times as much.)⁵² Evidently this was later interpreted, as we have already noted, to mean it would grow five times as fast as the common varieties.

Rev. W. H. Hingston has yet another version, as he lashes out at the Pastor: "He was a convicted crook [?] and a swindler [?] of the most contemptible sort, betraying the very trust of those who believed in him as God's Prophet and Mouthpiece, to sell dishonestly his 'miracle wheat,' which would produce 40, 60, 80, perhaps even a hundred bushels to the acre." (But no such numbers can be found anywhere in the records, either in the original *Watch Tower* notices or in the *Eagle* newspaper accounts.) Researcher D. Felderer makes the observation here that the real miracle involved in all this is not so much with the wheat as it is in twirling around imaginary numbers!⁵³

For anyone to find it necessary to single out the innocuous sale of wheat seed to lay grounds for fault with Pastor Russell surely seems like grasping at the proverbial straw. It is incredible that in the Pastor's active ministry of over forty years' duration, much of it before the public eye as author, lecturer and syndicated writer on the Christian faith, critics would find it necessary to dwell on such a trifling incident in an effort to discredit him. Further, for members of the clergy to take the leading role in attempting to build a case on this particular charge seems the height of hypocrisy. It is the established church systems, built upon the premise of a paid ministry and the necessity of expensive church edifices, that have given their sanction to nearly every conceivable money-raising scheme that can be devised. But it was Pastor Russell who openly and decisively challenged all of this as unauthorized by the Word of God and as wasteful and extravagant.

Consider these examples: Formal church collections have become part of most traditional worship services, yet Biblical precedent for such a practice is hard to find. The custom of tithing as enjoined by the Mosaic Law has been adopted as a requirement by many churches, with some even urging donations above this standard; but not a single text in all of the New Testament supports the custom. And in many (if not most) churches, money-raising schemes for support and building expansion occupy a central place. Such efforts include church socials, entertainment, bazaars, lotteries, games of chance, book and card sales, investment plans and business ventures. Again, one would be hard pressed to find any vestige of justification for such enterprises in the passages of Holy Scripture.

As aptly expressed by Rev. Richard Clearwaters:

“If the church is in the junk business on Monday
And in the restaurant business on Tuesday
And in the dry goods business on Wednesday
And in the theater business on Thursday
And in the grocery business on Friday
And in the bakery business on Saturday,
How will (the) community ever know what business
this church is in when Sunday comes?”⁵⁴

Since Pastor Russell's day, due to the relentless commercial emphasis of established religion, the churches in America have become big business in the highest sense. In 1981, it was estimated that generous Americans responded to various direct mail appeals alone from religious organizations by donating a whopping \$24.8 billion.⁵⁵ Almost all of the emotional and tear-eliciting appeals for money are written by professional marketing specialists using sensational techniques that smack of outright deception.

But it has remained for contemporary televangelists to scale new heights in adopting these methods to pressure and cajole their followers. In the early 1980s, a leading “faith healer” reported receiving “nearly \$12 million in one month” in response to a special “prayer partner” appeal series.⁵⁶ One cannot help but wonder if such funds could have been raised without promises of health and prosperity and miraculous answers to prayer. In 1987, the same preacher

announced that “God would take his life unless he raised \$8 million to provide scholarships to medical school students at his college [in Tulsa] by April 1 that year.” Two years later he announced that “he must have \$11 million [in donations] by May 6 or face financial collapse.”⁵⁷

In 1981, the various ministries of another leading televangelist raised \$64 million, with \$11.5 million of that amount reportedly left over in surplus funds. Yet in December of that year, he sent three “crisis” fund-raising letters to his supporters, claiming that individual donations of up to twenty-five dollars per month were “the only way we can keep up the Old-Time Gospel Hour (his TV program) on the air.”⁵⁸ A host of other examples could be cited and, in fact, such practices have become so commonplace in our day that they are hardly even considered scandalous.

Another popular technique in direct-mail solicitation is the use of premiums and gifts. Prospective donors are showered with membership stickers, Bibles, miniature bricks or stones, records, cassettes, medallions and even samples of wood or earth from the Holy Land. This increases the persuasion upon the recipient who is made to feel obligated to respond, even if the enclosed gift is “free.” Jeffrey K. Hadden, sociology professor at the University of Virginia, charges that, “Not since Vatican officials sold papal indulgences—written protection from the wages of sin—has there been such a public marketing of Christian favors.”⁵⁹

More and more thinking people are reaching the conclusion that such methods of raising money are not proper, are not fitting for organizations that invoke the name of God, and are not based upon Biblical ethics. They are being seen for what they really are—exploitation of the masses in the name of religion. And since religious groups in the United States are exempt from revealing anything about their finances, accountability in this area is a matter hard to evaluate.

NO CHURCH COLLECTIONS. Pastor Russell was unequivocally opposed to all such commercialization of religion and the exerting of pressure on the common person to support these institutions. The following excerpts give an inkling of his convictions regarding general appeals for money and church collections:

"We have from the first advocated the avoidance of public collections, not because we believe that there would be anything sinful in the procedure, and not because there is anything in the Scriptures to condemn it, but because the money question has been made so prominent throughout Christendom by all denominations that, in our opinion, its total avoidance would be to the Lord's glory. People who all their lives have been dunned for money are rapidly coming to believe that a great deal of the preaching and teaching, etc., is done for revenue ..."⁶⁰

"Had our Lord's sermons and parables been interlarded with appeals for money, it would have sapped their life ... The love of money and show and the begging system of Babylon today is much against its powerful influence; and the absence of this spirit amongst the Lord's faithful now, as at the first advent, tells much in their favor with those who study them as living epistles, not fully appreciating their teachings. In a most remarkable manner the Lord has provided thus far for his 'harvest' work without one solitary appeal being made for money; and we trust it will never be otherwise; believing that this is the Lord's mind."⁶¹

"Our thought, therefore, in connection with the avoidance of collections and all financial questions in the assemblies of the Church is not to discourage giving. So far as our observation goes, those who give to the Lord most abundantly, most heartily, most cheerfully, are the most blessed of him in spiritual matters. It will be observed that we are not limiting this expression, 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver,' to monetary gifts; but are including in it all the gifts and sacrifices which the Lord's people are privileged to present on the altar of sacrifice, and which God informs us he is pleased to accept through the merit of our dear Redeemer."⁶²

"Our advice is that the money question be left, so far as possible (and that we believe is **altogether**), out of consideration in the general meetings of the Church. We advise that the Spirit of the Lord be cultivated, and that as it richly dwells within, each will be anxious to do his

share toward meeting, not only the current expenses of the Church—rent, perhaps, or other expenses—but he will be anxious also to do what he can in respect to the extending of the light which is blessing his own soul, to others who yet sit in darkness. We advise along this same line that money be not solicited from outsiders, though we know of no reason why money tendered by outsiders should ever be refused.”⁶³

NO PAID MINISTRY. Before leaving the subject of church finances, we should look at something else about the Pastor that was troubling to orthodox churchianity—his conviction that salaries should not be paid to those engaged in the work of the ministry:

“The custom of a paid ministry, now so general and considered by many unavoidable and indispensable, was not the usage of the early Church.”⁶⁴

“But alas! nominal Christianity has grown great and worldly, and her servants are honored with the titles Reverend, Very Reverend, Most Reverend, and Doctor of Divinity; and with these honors and titles go salaries—not according to the minister’s needs, but on the commercial basis of his ability to attract large congregations and wealthy people. The natural result has followed—‘The priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD ...?’ ‘His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant ... Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own ... every one for his gain, from his [own] quarter ...’—Micah 3:11; Isa. 56:10, 11”⁶⁵

“Following in the footsteps of Jesus will not lead us in the direction of salaries: neither will the footsteps of his chief apostle, Paul. The latter, after showing that to ask earthly remuneration for spiritual services would in no sense violate justice, tells us of his own course in the matter in these words:—‘I have coveted no man’s silver or gold or apparel. Yea, yourselves know that these [my] hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and

to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." '—Acts 20:33-35" ⁶⁶

"There is no intimation, direct or indirect, that the elders [pastors] serving the Church at home received either salary or expense money; and we believe that it will generally be found advantageous to each local Church to use the voluntary services of its own members—few or many, great or insignificant. This Scriptural method is spiritually healthful: it tends to draw out all the various members in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, and leads all to look more to the Lord as the real Shepherd, than does the hiring method."⁶⁷

Unfaithful in Marriage?

Due to domestic difficulties, the year 1906 culminated for Pastor Russell in what by his own account amounted to the most trying experience of his entire career as a servant of God.⁶⁸ Even earlier in 1903, his wife had filed a petition for legal separation with alimony (at that time termed "divorce from bed and board"), charging humiliation and mental suffering. But the matter did not come to trial until April 1906 in a formal hearing before a judge and jury. Because of the Pastor's renown, a tumultuous court appearance generated widespread public interest.

Charles T. Russell and his wife, the former Maria F. Ackley, were married in 1879 and lived together happily and harmoniously for thirteen years. During this period, the Pastor described her as "a most devoted and loyal wife in every sense of the word."⁶⁹ Her mental acuity and high scholastic aptitude enabled her to grasp quickly the doctrinal foundations of the Bible Student movement. She cooperated with her husband in helping him publish the magazine—*Zion's Watch Tower*—which became the mainstay of the organization. For years she summarized his Sunday sermons which appeared as feature articles in the magazine, contributed some of her own articles, and served as its associate editor. She later claimed also to have assisted in preparing the first four volumes of the *Scripture Studies* series, which spelled out the basic doctrinal beliefs of

the Bible Students.⁷⁰ In the next section, we will examine this claim in greater detail.

In the late 1890s, a spirit of competition arose in Mrs. Russell which resulted in disagreement over the management of the *Watch Tower* magazine and her role in the Society. As the universally recognized founder and head of the movement, Pastor Russell had been given widespread publicity and acclaim. Not content with the honors which properly devolved upon her as the wife of the Pastor, she deemed it essential that she be given equal recognition, particularly in the management of the affairs of the *Watch Tower* and in writing for its columns. The Pastor, however, felt a special stewardship responsibility to the Lord and could not acquiesce to his wife's demands for unrestricted liberties along these lines, and particularly in permitting unedited articles of a doctrinal kind to appear.⁷¹

In 1897, Mrs. Russell took it upon herself to bring matters to a head. She prevailed upon two prominent Bible Students to form a committee along the lines of Matthew 18:15-17 to hear both sides of the contention. When her self-appointed committee formally met in the presence of the Russells and ruled against her, she was shocked, burst into tears and left the room. Afterward, upon her husband's suggestion and in front of the committee, the Russells shook hands, "kissed and made up."⁷² But the accord was short-lived. Mrs. Russell's contentious spirit arose again stronger than ever and led finally, without notice, to her leaving her husband in November 1897. When further efforts at reconciliation failed, they lived separately from that time onward.⁷³

In addition to differences over management of the journal, there were other factors involved in their marriage which made it a most unusual human union, to say the least. At the outset, both of them had expressed their desire to continue living a celibate life, and indeed, both stated that there had been no cohabitation between them for all the years that they lived together. Whether such agreement can form the basis of a lasting marital bond between man and wife and to what extent the lack of normal intimacy contributed to a less than satisfactory relationship is a matter of conjecture.⁷⁴ In any event, with the benefit of this personal experience, in 1904 the Pastor specifically addressed the subject of marital privileges

and obligations of Christian believers, in a chapter of his book, *The New Creation* (Volume Six of the *Scripture Studies* series). He counseled that “reasonable marital rights” were not to be refused to each other, quoting from 1 Corinthians 7:5, and then specifically warned, “neither would it be proper ... that they should together vow a life of celibacy in the bonds of wedlock.”⁷⁵

By 1903 Mrs. Russell demonstrated complete estrangement not only from her husband but from his work as well by publishing a tract designed to injure his character by gross perversions of the facts. These were sent to as many *Watch Tower* subscribers as possible and additionally were supplied to ministers of the churches in the various towns where “pilgrim” services were carried out. She apparently expected that the clergy would be so antagonistic to Pastor Russell that they would eagerly give wide circulation to her tracts. But as later noted by the Pastor, to their credit not many ministers at the time were willing to cooperate and some made it quite clear that they considered the entire matter a despicable scheme.⁷⁶

This led up to the court trial in 1906, which was convened to hear Mrs. Russell's petition for legal separation. Since, in fact, there had been a total separation for nine years during which the Pastor had voluntarily provided her with a place to live and monthly maintenance for support, it appeared again that Mrs. Russell's main object was to seek public opportunity for discrediting his ministry. The basic charges brought against her husband were for mental cruelty, unkind treatment and acting in an “amorous” manner, “embracing all who would respond.”

A FISH STORY. The last charge became known as the “jellyfish story” because it likened the Pastor to a jellyfish, floating “around here and there” to various receptive women of the church. He was alleged to have said, “I touch this one and that one, and if she responds I take her to me, and if not I float on to others.” The story created a sensation in the courtroom at the time. The Pastor testified that he had never heard it before and later commented that “all reasonable people concluded that only an idiotic person would make such an uncomplimentary remark about himself.”⁷⁷ The accusation could not be verified and was not allowed to stand by the judge, who charged the jury accordingly and struck the testimony

from the records. But as has been said, this was “a little fish story that was to grow into a whale of a lot of ammunition for the Pastor’s enemies for years beyond his death.”⁷⁸

The Washington *Post* seized upon the incident almost immediately and charged the Pastor with “immorality.” The newspaper was promptly served with a libel suit, and in the ensuing trial the Pastor was exonerated and awarded one dollar in damages. But the Pastor’s counsel appealed the case regardless, since he felt the judge’s instructions to the jury on behalf of the *Post* were erroneous and prejudiced. The case eventually was remanded for retrial, but by this time the *Post* was willing to compromise. It paid an undisclosed but substantial sum to the Pastor, accepted all court costs and even agreed to publish his syndicated sermons!⁷⁹

Soon thereafter, the Chicago *Mission Friend* attacked the Pastor by publishing uncomplimentary remarks by a New Jersey clergyman who had alluded to the “jellyfish episode” as factual. Again Pastor Russell sued to vindicate his name and was able to secure favorable terms in the final adjudication: “The *Mission Friend* paid all the costs and published a retraction admitting that it had wrongfully published the ... ‘jellyfish’ story concerning Pastor Russell; further stating that Pastor Russell is a Christian and gentleman of the highest integrity and moral standing and entitled to the respect and esteem of all good people.”⁸⁰

TWO YOUNG LADIES. At the original trial for legal separation, Mrs. Russell attempted to give other examples of her husband’s alleged loose moral conduct. These instances involved the Pastor’s relationship with two young ladies living at the “Bethel Home,” the dormitory for the Watch Tower workers. The first concerned a young orphan girl named “Rose” who was taken in as a member of the Russell family in 1888; the second, a live-in domestic helper named “Emily.”

Rose was quite childish in appearance and may have been around thirteen years of age at the time. On the stand Mrs. Russell charged an improper intimacy between the girl and Mr. Russell, stating it in such a way as to imply that he had been guilty of adultery. This prompted the judge to inquire, if criminal intimacy were charged, why had it not been made part of the plea. However, it

turned out that all that had been meant was that the girl had been seen in the Watch Tower office one day sitting on the Pastor's knee and kissing him. To further clear up the point, Mrs. Russell was asked on the witness stand whether she believed her husband was guilty of adultery. She answered unequivocally, "No."⁸¹

The next day the Pastor brought out the fuller circumstances of the kissing incident. Rose, in tears, had approached the Pastor in his office, sat on his knee and complained that Mrs. Russell "had worked her too hard" that morning and that she "felt weary and friendless." The Pastor defended his wife as not intentionally being unkind to her, and assured Rose that, if she would speak to Mrs. Russell about it, she would understand. That prompted Rose to suddenly dry her tears and give him an appreciative kiss. The Russells discussed the incident together that night and both agreed to look after her interests more carefully, especially since Rose had just lost her brother in a fatal illness and was surely experiencing loneliness and grief. The incident also caused the Russells to adopt Rose as their daughter and thereafter she became a full member of their household.⁸²

Regarding Emily, the young sister in Christ who served as a domestic helper in the Russell household, another story was related by Mrs. Russell. One day she had discovered her husband in Emily's room with the door locked! Again, it turned out to be a partial truth without full explanation, designed to impart a false inference to the public.

The next day on the witness stand, the Pastor explained the entire matter. It turned out that Emily had taken ill one morning and could not work. The Pastor was called upon to check on her condition and prescribe medicine, as he routinely did for various members of the "Bethel" home where the church workers lived. The door was locked for a few seconds to reduce nearby commotion and possible interruption so that the Pastor could hear what Emily had to say about her condition. Emily testified under oath that he had been with her for less than a minute and that then and at all times his conduct toward her had been most exemplary.⁸³

Since the allegations made against him at the trial were wholly out of character with the man, his life and his high principles of

conduct, it was not at all difficult for Pastor Russell to counter these with his own testimony and with that of others familiar with his personal affairs. Thus all seemed to go rather well for the Pastor, and the judge in the case gave a strong charge to the jury which was as favorable as might be expected, pointing out that the allegations of the plaintiff had not been established. But to the surprise of all, the jury decided in favor of granting the divorce (actually a legal separation) on the grounds that they felt a reconciliation was not possible and that both parties would be happier thus. The loss of the suit, however, despite the good intentions of the jury, obviously subjected Pastor Russell to a new line of reproach from his enemies. The damage was done and the charge of “loose moral conduct” could now be perpetuated regardless, of course, of its truthfulness or fairness.

The Pastor’s marital problems, difficult as they were, at first were thought best to be kept private to the extent possible, without burdening others in the movement. But as time went on, and especially after the contentious court trial, more of the brethren began to hear of the matter and especially of the false charges that had begun to circulate. There was concern that, unless the Pastor brought it into the open, at least as far as his followers were concerned, it would become a serious trial for many. Finally he was persuaded that a full revealing of the facts of the case would be helpful and he consented to do so in the July 15, 1906 issue of the *Watch Tower* (which we have cited earlier), to be restricted to private circulation to the extent possible.

In two related articles in that special issue Pastor Russell provided a detailed account of his wife’s change in attitude and desire for a greater role in the Society’s affairs and the contentious spirit that finally led to her estrangement. He said that every word was carefully weighed in order that the account be as accurate as possible and yet not reflect unfairly upon his wife. His explanation of events, however, has been virtually ignored by critics from the established churches and those disposed to defame his reputation.

REFLECTIONS. In reviewing the facts relating to the personal life of Pastor Russell and his relationship to his wife, Maria, one cannot help but be struck by the irony of the situation. On the

one hand are the overwhelming evidences of the loving, kindly disposition of the Pastor, which prevailed through all the years of their married life; on the other, the nefarious efforts of his adversaries to distort this picture by creating false and derogatory impressions of him and succeeding in measure to fasten such an image upon the public. Yet Mrs. Russell herself, in 1894, after fifteen years of marriage, arose to a noble defense of her husband during a brief conspiracy against him. In an open letter to the church, she wrote:

"I take this opportunity to speak in defense of my husband against the bold attack of our enemies in maligning his character and misrepresenting our domestic relations. Our household is composed only of ourselves and our esteemed and beloved helpers in the Watch Tower office, all of whom gladly bear witness to the tranquility and happiness of our home ...

"Our home, so far from being a discordant one, is the very reverse,—most happy. I could, indeed, pray for no greater earthly blessing upon all the dear saints than that their home-life might be as peaceful and happy as our[s]. The liberty wherewith Christ makes free is enjoyed by all who are of our household or in any way connected with the work; not the liberty of anarchy, however, but of subjection to the Spirit and Word of God ..."⁸⁴

Later that same year, Mrs. Russell wrote a follow-up letter in which she again loyally defended her husband against those who were maliciously attempting to misrepresent him. She spoke of "the depth of wickedness to which these men would stoop, under the influence of envy and ambition." She then cited a number of brethren who, after being informed of the vicious attack, had remarked openly "that such a charge would have no weight with anyone who knew Mr. Russell or who had ever looked into his face." She summarized the effort of those involved in the conspiracy as "one of the many cunning methods of misrepresentation resorted to by these wicked men—because they do not know any real crimes to lay to his charge."⁸⁵

Even after the seeds of disharmony began to sprout, the Pastor exhibited that gentleness, patience and love to his dear wife for which he was generally known in his dealings with the brethren at

large, yet now directed in a special way toward her. During a particularly troublesome illness that struck his wife and caused her to break out in a rash from head to foot, he devotedly cared for her personally and dressed the wounds at least three times daily. He later wrote that he showered her with such “kind and incessant attentions” to “touch her heart and restore it to its former tender and loving condition.” But no action on his part seemed to be able to restrain the competitive spirit that developed or check his wife’s unending demands for equal responsibilities in the management of the *Watch Tower* publication and affairs.⁸⁶

In 1897, after matters had continued to deteriorate, the Pastor sent a formal letter to his wife. In eloquent terms he tried reasoning with her in hopes of rekindling her first love and restoring her former loyalty and devotedness. He wrote:

“No one on earth so really loves you, or so genuinely desires your advancement in all the graces of the spirit of Christ and in the service of our dear Redeemer. Come back to me, my dear! I promise that I will do all in my power to make you as happy as you ever were, and as much more so as lies in my power ...

“Stop, I entreat you, and join me in humble heart to seek afresh to know the will of our Lord and Master ... Remember that the present matter is as humiliating for me as for you, because if a wife is the glory of her husband, so any reflection, even against her, is to his injury and shame. Remember, also, that I will be anxious to lift up your head and influence in every proper manner, and will not glory over you as a foe, but as one who has recovered a lost and highly-prized treasure.

“And now, my dear wife, all that I could wish for us as respects my earthly life is that I may serve the Lord, his cause and his people, amongst whom no one can hold so near and dear a place as you have held and may again hold if you will. And next to my effort to serve and please the Lord shall be my effort to serve and please you as my wife, if you will permit it and cooperate to that end ...”⁸⁷

The Pastor's effort at reconciliation met with some limited success but again proved temporary. The full break occurred later in that year (1897) as the contentious spirit in Mrs. Russell returned and led to ever increasing slanders and exaggerations against her husband. But even then no one could have imagined the extent to which she would go and the campaign of vilification in which she would engage. This culminated, as we have noted, in the extreme allegations made in the suit for legal separation, even to the extent of intimating that the Pastor had been guilty of promiscuous behavior.

Unfortunately, the granting of the request for separation gave seeming credence to the false charges, even though it was evident that they were unsubstantiated and had been fully answered. The door was now opened for the Pastor's enemies to build upon half truths and outright falsehoods, and the opportunity was not passed up. Again and again the charge of marital infidelity and loose morals has been made by those seeking to defame the Pastor's name.⁸⁸

There is a certain degree of power in the repetition of a lie, so that with the passage of time it takes on the aura of truth. Given sufficient repetition, any assertion will be accepted by a certain percentage of hearers as factual, especially when they may not be willing to make the effort to verify its accuracy. This is especially so if the information is passed on by sources believed to be reliable, such as respected authors or researchers. And thus it is that the libelous charge against the Pastor continues to this day, being picked up and transmitted in recognized church reference sources which include no mention of the published facts to the contrary.

There is an intriguing final sequel to the story of Pastor Russell and his relationship to his wife, Maria, that only recently has been reported. It occurred on the day of his funeral at Carnegie Hall in Pittsburgh on November 6, 1916. Just as the service was about to begin at two o'clock in the afternoon, before a packed auditorium of devoted friends, a veiled figure was seen walking down the aisle to the casket, then laying some flowers on it. They were lilies of the valley, the Pastor's favorite flowers. Attached was a ribbon with the words, "To My Beloved Husband." It was Mrs. Russell in a final tribute to his memory!⁸⁹ Did it represent a change of heart on her

part? Was it a belated acknowledgment of his fidelity as her husband? Was she remorseful for the grief that she had caused him? One can only pause and wonder.

Not Sole Author of *Studies in the Scriptures*?

As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Russell at the separation trial stated that she had a prominent part in preparing the first four volumes of *The Millennial Dawn* series, later termed *Studies in the Scriptures*. Some critics have taken up on this and implied that the Pastor's wife had a much greater role in writing the mainstay publications of the Watch Tower Society than is generally acknowledged. Therefore, we think it will be helpful to turn to the transcripts of record in the court trial and subsequent appeal, noting the conflicting testimonies of Mrs. Russell and her husband in this regard, and determine if a harmonization is possible.

CONFLICTING TESTIMONIES. At the original trial, Maria Russell was asked by her attorney, "What part, if any, did you take in the writing of those books [referring to *The Millennial Dawn* series]?" She replied:

"In the writing of them my husband and I talked a great deal over the subjects, and I formulated the plans for each one of those volumes ... We published four volumes while I was with him, and each one of those volumes I laid out the plan for the book, and then I laid out the plans for each chapter, and I went to work and wrote, and I wrote quite a part; I did at least half of the work, fully that, and I remember distinctly because this last one I worked at was the fourth volume, and I really wrote the whole of it. I wrote seven chapters, and before I completed it to the end, about one chapter, I said, Husband: [Her testimony officially interrupted at this point by attorneys for both sides who didn't want further details]"⁹⁰

The following year during the appeal testimony, Mrs. Russell was again asked by her attorney, "Who wrote the *Millennial Dawn*?" She answered:

“Well, the books were written by myself and Mr. Russell, all that Mr. Russell wrote was submitted to me for examination; I laid the plans for each of these volumes, and I can testify that at least one-half the work, and I think more, is mine, and of the fourth volume I wrote the entire volume except one chapter, but when seven chapters of that had gone to the printer, Mr. Russell took offense and never used the balance of it; he finished it himself, so that is the way the fourth volume ended; the Hymn Book was entirely my own work.”⁹¹

In reply to the question, “Did your name appear upon the title page of either of these publications?,” she said:

“Of all of them, unless they have been taken off in recent years; I have not seen their recent editions, but it was mentioned in the preface of each volume.”⁹²

And to the question, “Who was given as the writer of these volumes?,” she replied:

“Mr. Russell called himself the author and me the assistant.”⁹³

That completes the testimony of Mrs. Russell on the extent of her participation in writing the Volumes. At issue here is certainly a matter of semantics—What did Mrs. Russell mean when she stated that she “wrote” much of the material? Did she mean that she sat down and composed a significant amount of the sentences, paragraphs and chapters that make up the books? If so, were they formulated on her own or from working notes of her husband? Was she acting more as an original writer or in the role of a secretary? These are matters that are not made clear from her testimony and need to be resolved from other sources.

Her words suggest several avenues to be explored: the Title pages of the early editions of the Volumes, their Prefaces, and the Hymn Book, all of which allegedly reflected her share in the work. We will, therefore, consider these sources, but first, let us continue with the transcripts of record, turning now to Pastor Russell's comments on these matters as shown in the appeal testimony.

The Pastor's attorney asked him in a brief way to explain his wife's connection with the preparation of the *Millennial Dawn* books. He replied:

"I heard Mrs. Russell's testimony and noted in particular her reference to the fourth volume of the *Millennial Dawn*, her remark that a considerable portion of it, probably one-half, was her work, and that then for some reason I seemed dissatisfied and took it entirely out of her hands, etc. I answer that Mrs. Russell did do considerable of the forepart of the fourth volume, because this is nearly all of it, the collection of clippings which we had been selecting for some years, and the large part of it, the report of the congress of religions held in Chicago, at the World's Fair. I have no desire to belittle in any manner the assistance rendered me by my wife, but could not at all agree with her statement. I would have preferred to have said nothing on the subject, but since it seems necessary to answer her, I would say that much of her work is of a kind that is done in nearly any office, proof reading, and the work of an amanuensis ...

"At the time of Mrs. Russell's association with me, she was very willing indeed, and in very full sympathy with me, especially during the time of the preparation of the first three volumes, and I have no doubt she would have been glad to have done a great deal more than she did do. But I have no thought at all that Mrs. Russell would be able to write the three volumes, or the fourth volume, or any of the volumes. If she has that ability, I have never found it out."⁹⁴

Later, in cross examination, the Pastor was queried in regard to his wife's literary abilities and the extent of her participation in writing the volumes of *Millennial Dawn* [*Scripture Studies*]. The exact dialogue was as follows:

"Q. What do you say with reference to her literary ability?

"A. I said that if Mrs. Russell had ability to write the volumes of the Dawn studies, I had no knowledge

of it; I do not think she has the ability. I said I did not wish to belittle her ability in any way.

“Q. Then did she write any of the volumes?

“A. None of the volumes.

“Q. Did she write any of the chapters?

“A. She labored in connection with myself on some of the chapters, among other things, but she had no knowledge of the subject, because it was new to her.

“Q. I call your attention to the chapter devoted to the pyramids and ask you who wrote that.

“A. I wrote it.

“Q. You wrote it?

“A. Yes, sir.

“Q. Your wife did not write it?

“A. No, sir, she co-labored in the arrangement, she read the proof and examined my manuscript, perhaps.”⁹⁵

Thus the Pastor's testimony provided a vastly different version of the extent of his wife's share in preparing the Volumes. In essence, he pointed out that many of the specific subjects presented were new to her and that she did not have the background needed to write as a co-author. In general, she was his secretary, proofread his manuscripts and did the usual work of an office assistant. On some of the chapters she co-labored with him in arranging them in final form and especially so in the forepart of the Fourth Volume, which consisted largely of quotations from newspaper clippings which they had selected for some years. But overall, his estimate was that his wife would not have been able to carry out the actual writing of the contents of any of the Volumes.

REFLECTIONS. Mrs. Russell's reply to the specific question of whether her name appeared on the Title pages of any of the books seems strange: “Of all of them, unless they have been taken off in recent years.” Her name was never affixed on any Title page of any edition of the Volumes and hence could not have been removed at a later date. For that matter, neither was Pastor Russell's name

shown—it was not his practice to place his name there; it appeared merely at the close of each Preface.

In the early editions of Volumes One and Two, mention is made of authorship in both Prefaces. In the November 1886 Preface to Volume One, the Pastor specifically referred to himself as “the author” of the work and also acknowledged receiving “valuable assistance” from his “help-mate” in connection therewith. The 1889 Preface to Volume Two likewise mentions his “help-mate” in the context of assisting “the writer.” In her appeal testimony, Mrs. Russell summarized the Pastor’s depiction (with which she did not agree) by saying, “Mr. Russell called himself the author and me the assistant.”

To our knowledge, possibly the first public complaint by Mrs. Russell of this characterization of herself as being subordinate to her husband as “author” of the Volumes, was not made until early 1903. In that year she published a tract designed to injure the reputation of the Pastor, and had it distributed especially to readers of the *Watch Tower* magazine. Though consisting mainly of extracts from letters that Mrs. Russell and her husband had exchanged, the tract does say in passing that she was “not receiving a dollar from her husband, nor from the literary work so largely hers.”⁹⁶ Since the First Volume was written in 1886, some seventeen years would have elapsed until she publicly raised an objection to her not being shown as co-author, if indeed that is what she was referring to here.

Mrs. Russell’s statement in regard to the Bible Student Hymn Book as being “entirely [her] work” also seems curious. The 1890 edition brought together 333 hymns, almost all of which were standard church hymns of the era. In the Index, there is a listing of nineteen hymns that are attributed to her—apparently either original or substantially altered. These were referred to by the Pastor as coming “from the pen of our beloved helpmate, Sister Russell.”⁹⁷ However, it is evident that the others were compiled from various church sources: Many of the hymnals are listed in the Introduction, and the authors of the individual hymns are shown in the Index. Later in his journal the Pastor wrote of them as, “the choicest hymns collected from every quarter,” “of all denominations,” and that “very few of the hymns [were] original.”⁹⁸

What then might Mrs. Russell have meant by “entirely my work”? Perhaps that she was the sole person responsible for compiling these particular hymns into the book that came to be known as *Hymns of Dawn*. Perhaps that the only original additions were the nineteen hymns that she personally had mainly written as shown in the Index. Or perhaps that she alone was responsible for the numerous revisions that were required to conform the hymns to Bible Student beliefs. (More than half required some modification.) Yet even this does not square with the Pastor’s words in the Introduction, where he clearly implies that he was primarily responsible for the work. Then, similar to the early Volumes, he also acknowledges “the very valuable assistance of [his] life-companion and faithful co-laborer in [its] editing.”⁹⁹

Coming back to the court testimony, as one reads over the transcripts, it becomes readily evident what Mrs. Russell’s attorneys were attempting to do. They needed to establish that her role with the Society was vital in its formative years and contributed substantially to its ongoing success. It was intended as more than just a compliment to her, as conceded directly by her counsel, Mr. Porter. When one of his questions to her was objected to as irrelevant, he candidly explained to the judge: “It is our intention to give a brief history of the marriage relations of these people for the purpose of showing that the wife materially aided by her labors in the laying of the foundations of Mr. Russell’s fortune.”¹⁰⁰ The more valuable Mrs. Russell’s role could be portrayed, undoubtedly the higher would be the amount of alimony judged appropriate.

In line with this objective, Mrs. Russell must have been under intense pressure from her attorneys to paint as strong a picture as possible of her material worth to the Society. No doubt, if a large portion of this could be attributed to her direct contribution to the writing of the foundational Watch Tower publications, it would make a favorable impression in this regard. Hence, we see the strong possibility that Mrs. Russell’s portrayal of her own role in writing and preparing the Volumes and the Hymn Book might have been somewhat overdone, perhaps even exaggerated, to build her case along these lines.

In evaluating the true function of Mrs. Russell, it appears that she acted in the capacity of special assistant to her husband as his loyal and faithful wife. She was studious, college trained, and capable in her own right. No doubt the Pastor utilized her talents to the fullest, not only in secretarial functions, but in acting as organizer and arranger of his manuscript notes. But it is apparent that being a close assistant and even an editor should not be confused with being the author of a work.

Therefore, it seems reasonable that any writing on Mrs. Russell's part was carried out under the close supervision of the Pastor and did not originate entirely with her. Indeed, this seems almost implicit in the testimony that she gave, with mention of the intense interaction between them before the writing reached its final form. We thus conclude that, if Mrs. Russell's statement was intended to go beyond merely rendering such directed assistance and included a claim to substantial writing of the first four Volumes, it would seem like an exaggeration and stretching of the truth.

Endnotes: Chapter 7

1. *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany*, "A Refutation of False Charges Against Pastor Russell," Sept.-Oct., 1975 (hereafter cited as *Epiphany*), p. 70, quoting from J. J. Ross, *Some Facts About the Self-styled "Pastor" Charles T. Russell*.
2. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), "Interesting Letters: A Reply by the Editor" (hereafter cited as "Letters"), Sept. 15, 1914, p. 5543.
3. *Epiphany*, p. 71.
4. Ditlieb Felderer, untitled thesis regarding the early history of the Bible Student movement (hereafter cited as Felderer), p. 15, quoting from *Spectator* newspaper article of Monday, March 17, 1913, p. 14.

5. Felderer, p. 42, quoting from the *Watchtower* magazine, 1953 issue, p. 319.
6. Felderer, p. 31, quoting from David L. McLean's doctorate thesis, *History of the Jehovah's Witnesses*.
7. *Epiphany*, p. 71.
8. Walter R. Martin and Norman H. Klann, *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, pp. 18-19.
9. *Epiphany*, p. 71; Felderer, p. 15.
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13. M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, p. 43.
14. Felderer, p. 41.
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19. Felderer, pp. 45, 103-104.
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22. *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1970*. Part 1. "Education" (hereafter cited as *Statistics*), pp. 385-386.
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24. *Statistics*, pp. 385-386.
25. Felderer, p. 104.
26. Felderer, p. 105, quoting from Clarence E. Mason, Jr., *Standing on the Promises*.
27. Felderer, pp. 119-121.
28. Felderer, p. 122.
29. Felderer, p. 129, quoting from John Gill, *A Body of Divinity*, pp. 866-869.
30. *Reprints*, "Letters," Sept. 15, 1914, p. 5543.

31. *Reprints*, “Editor’s Answers to Interesting Questions: Two Ordinations—One of God, One of Man” (hereafter cited as “Editor’s Answers”), Dec. 1, 1915, p. 5807.
32. *Reprints*, “Editor’s Answers,” Dec. 1, 1915, pp. 5807-5808.
33. Felderer, p. 28; *The World Book Encyclopedia*, “Dwight Lyman Moody,” Vol. 13, p. 781; Thomas C. Reeves, *The Empty Church* (hereafter cited as Reeves), p. 99.
34. *The Lincoln Library of Essential Information*, “William Ashley Sunday,” Vol. 2, p. 1983; *The Encyclopedia Americana*, “Billy Sunday,” Vol. 26, p. 20; Reeves, p. 107.
35. *Reprints*, “Views From the Watch Tower” (hereafter cited as “Views”), March 15, 1908, p. 4152.
36. *Reprints*, “Views,” March 15, 1908, p. 4152.
37. *Reprints*, “Views,” March 15, 1908, p. 4152.
38. *Reprints*, “Views,” Oct. 1, 1908, p. 4250.
39. *Reprints*, “Views,” March 15, 1908, p. 4153.
40. *Reprints*, “A Donation of Miracle Wheat,” June 15, 1911, p. 4844.
41. *Reprints*, “As Deceivers and Yet True” (hereafter cited as “True”), Feb. 15, 1913, p. 5190.
42. Marley Cole, *Jehovah’s Witnesses* (hereafter cited as Cole), p. 69.
43. *Pastor Russell’s Convention Discourses* (hereafter cited as *Discourses*), “Pastor Russell in Reply to Critics,” Tacoma, Washington Convention, June 1913 letter to Tacoma *Tribune* (hereafter cited as “Reply to Critics”), p. 372.
44. Cole, p. 69.
45. *Reprints*, “True,” Feb. 15, 1913, p. 5190.
46. Felderer, p. 148, quoting from Hamilton *Spectator*, March 18, 1913, p. 5.
47. *Reprints*, “True,” Feb. 15, 1913, p. 5190.
48. *Reprints*, “Interesting Letters,” March 1, 1915, p. 5648.
49. Fritz Ridenour, ed., *So What’s the Difference?*, p. 132.
50. Felderer, p. 153, quoting from Stan Thomas, *Jehovah’s Witnesses and What They Believe*, p. 28; *Discourses*, “Reply to Critics,” p. 372.
51. Felderer, p. 178, quoting from the *Watchtower* magazine, May 1953, p. 319; *Discourses*, “Reply to Critics,” p. 372.

52. Felderer, p. 149, quoting from Robert Mignard, "Fifteen Reasons Why I Cannot Be a Jehovah's Witness."
53. Felderer, p. 150, quoting from W. H. Hingston, *Jehovah's Witnesses Exposed*, p. 39.
54. Felderer, p. 167, quoting from Richard V. Clearwaters, *Financing the Work of the Local Church*.
55. *Los Angeles Times* (hereafter cited as *Times*), "Evangelists Cashing In on the Mail," by Russell Chandler, Nov. 25, 1982 (hereafter cited as "Evangelists").
56. *Times*, "Evangelists."
57. *Times*, "Two TV Ministries Rise Above Bible Belt," by John Dart, April 1, 1989.
58. *Times*, "Evangelists."
59. *Times*, "Evangelists."
60. C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The New Creation*, p. 339.
61. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 286.
62. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 341.
63. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 347.
64. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 285.
65. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 286-287.
66. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 287-288.
67. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 288.
68. *Reprints*, "Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction" and "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" (two related articles hereafter cited as "Truth"), July 15, 1906, p. 3808.
69. *Reprints*, "Truth," July 15, 1906, p. 3810.
70. Transcript of record in trial of *Russell vs. Russell* in the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, PA (June Term 1903, No. 459, for which the actual court trial took place in April 1906) (hereafter cited as Transcript of trial), p. 8; and Transcript of record in *Russell vs. Russell*, on appeal before the Pennsylvania Superior Court (April 1907) (hereafter cited as Transcript of appeal), pp. 120-121.
Note: Original petition for legal separation was filed by Maria Russell in April 1903; it was answered by the Pastor in the same month and year but did not come to trial until April 1906. However, the official Transcript of record of the *Russell vs. Russell* trial is listed under "June Term, 1903 [not 1906], No. 459, in the Court of Common

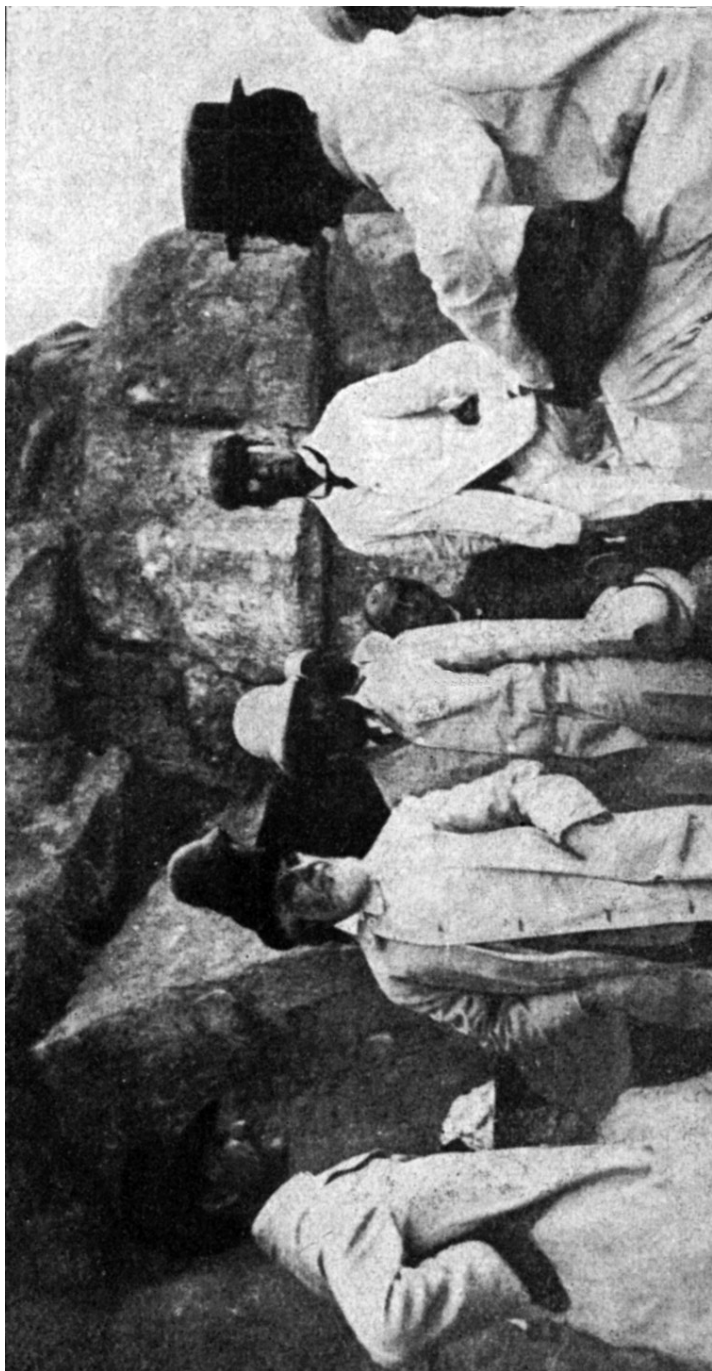
Pleas No. 1 of Allegheny County, PA.” Likewise, the index page of the transcript is headed, “459 June 1903.”

71. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3812.
72. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, pp. 3812-3813.
73. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, pp. 3813-3815.
74. Historian M. James Penton (hereafter cited as Penton) is of the opinion that their agreement to remain celibate “no doubt caused some strain between them,” particularly on the part of Maria Russell, whom he described as “understandably, a sexually frustrated woman.” (*Apocalypse Delayed*, p. 35.)
75. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 512.
76. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3815.
77. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3815.
78. Cole, p. 64.
79. Cole, p. 65.
80. Cole, p. 65.
81. Cole, p. 64; *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3815.
82. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3815.
83. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3816.
84. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3810.
85. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, pp. 3810-3811.
86. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3812.
87. *Reprints*, “Truth,” July 15, 1906, p. 3813.
88. Penton observes: “Russell’s separation from his wife unfortunately occasioned and continues to occasion severe and largely unfair attacks on his reputation.” (*Apocalypse Delayed*, p. 35.)
89. *Jehovah’s Witnesses, Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, p. 646.
Note: The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ *Yearbook* for 1975 cites this incident and quotes the exact words of Anna K. Gardner, who was at the funeral. She reported that the writing on the ribbon attached to the flowers, “To My Beloved Husband,” was taken as a public acknowledgment of the fact that Maria had never been divorced from the Pastor. (1975 *Yearbook*, p. 68.) But these recollections had not been put into print until decades after the event.

The *St. Paul Enterprise*, a weekly newspaper favorable to Pastor Russell, in a special issue of November 14, 1916, devoted to the passing of the Pastor, lends credence to this story. A personal account of

the graveside service was given by the editor of the paper, William L. Abbott. He reported that Maria and another heavily veiled lady (thought to have been her older sister, Emma), each on the arms of brethren (a Brother Pyles of Washington and, to his best recollection, a Brother Driscoll), followed the coffin to its final resting place. Thus, Maria's presence at her husband's funeral was definitely established at the time by this newspaper account covering the event. (*St. Paul Enterprise*, a compilation of Special Editions of Tuesday, November 7, 14, 21 and 28, 1916, p. 10. Published by Brian Kutscher, Bible Students' Archives, Feb. 1995.)

90. Transcript of trial, pp. 8-9.
91. Transcript of appeal, pp. 120-121.
92. Transcript of appeal, p. 121.
93. Transcript of appeal, p. 121.
94. Transcript of appeal, pp. 213-214.
95. Transcript of appeal, pp. 242-243.
96. *Readers of "Zion's Watch Tower" and "Millennial Dawn"—Attention!*, p. 13. [No author is shown, but it seemingly was written by Maria Russell in the third person.] See also *Reprints*, "Truth," July 15, 1906, p. 3815.
97. *Reprints*, "Poems and Hymns of Dawn," May, 1890, p. 1211.
98. *Reprints*, "Our New Hymn Book With Music," Mar. 15, 1906, p. 3749; "Shall We Sing Unitedly?," Feb. 15, 1907, p. 3942; "An Excellent Plan," May 1, 1895, p. 1808.
99. *Poems and Hymns of Dawn*, Introduction by C. T. Russell, p. 6.
100. Transcript of appeal, pp. 119-120.



The Pastor Visiting the Great Pyramid in Egypt (1912)

Far from proving an occultic connection, his interest in the Pyramid was to confirm Truths clearly taught in the Bible.

8

Current Charges of Critics

IN THE previous chapter, we traced some of the main allegations brought against Pastor Russell in his day. Now, almost ninety years have passed since his death. Although deeply loved by some, he continues to be bitterly attacked by others. Remarkably, none of his current foes have any first-hand knowledge of the Pastor, yet they blindly repeat many of the old accusations from the past. More amazing is the ever-increasing variety of new charges being leveled against him, some of which seem to be the product of active imaginations and involve the wildest of speculations.

What induces such behavior on the part of Pastor Russell's detractors? His teaching of forgiveness and restoration to those who have not accepted Christ in this life—the so-called “second chance”—has long been a source of irritation to the orthodox clergy and prompts unceasing opposition. But newer charges continue to surface from secular sources as well and often are of a sensational nature. Although these may attract attention and sell copy, they nonetheless take a toll on the Pastor's reputation. Perhaps his opponents simply are unable to fathom such a highly successful businessman who would devote his life totally to an unselfish, philanthropic

ministry. As one of his loyal admirers expressed it, the Pastor was just “too innocent, too holy for this evil world.”

To this day, his enemies make every conceivable effort to uncover some “secret fault,” impugn his motives, or reiterate false charges of the past without making a sincere effort to investigate the true facts. Specialty groups have arisen, whose main purpose is to spread malicious information against the Pastor. It has been estimated that in the United States alone, more than two hundred anti-Russell individuals and groups spew out an unending mix of poison, hate and misinformation in hundreds of publications, videos and tracts, and on Internet web sites.¹

In Pastor Russell’s era, his foes were never able to mount a successful campaign against him. For forty years his ministry grew in favor with the public at large and he was highly respected as a contemporary religious leader, as we have seen. Serious charges raised against him were vigorously countered by the Pastor himself, and for the most part his reputation remained untarnished. But since his death, the situation has changed drastically, abetted in part by the seeming reticence of his supporters to formally offset the mounting slander by providing a well documented defense. This has resulted in a backlog of assorted accusations that need to be seriously addressed.

Let us now take a look at some of these current charges, comparing them to the factual record of the Pastor’s life and ministry. Once again our objective will be to distinguish truth from malice and to enable our readers to draw their own conclusions. Particularly in this instance where the reputation of a distinguished messenger of God is at stake, we deem it essential to persevere to the point of full understanding and satisfaction to every sincere inquirer.

Bible Students a Cult?

In characterizing the religious group brought into being by Pastor Russell, critics will frequently use the term “cult.” Martin and Klann are typical in their description:

“Charles Taze Russell founded, operated, propagated and gave his life to furthering this cult, and his teachings permeate every major phase of its doctrines ...”²

The word “cult” is purposely selected for its derogatory effect in linking the Pastor and the Bible Students with the negative connotations immediately associated with this term:

(a) The presence of a forceful, charismatic leader who demands absolute obedience of his tightly knit group of followers, often accompanied by a delusion of himself as “messianic.”

(b) The formation of a distinctive group that is out of touch with society and whose beliefs and customs are of questionable worth, often openly evil or detrimental, even bizarre.

(c) The use of nefarious methods such as deception, brain-washing, sleep-deprivation, arranged marriages and surrender of assets, to control every aspect of the lives of its adherents.

(d) The requirement that members of the group break off all previous family ties and contacts with their friends.

Added to this list in our day is the memory of recent tragic events connected with various doomsday cults—the Heaven’s Gate suicides in San Diego County, California (1997), the Branch Davidian debacle in Waco, Texas (1993) and the death of over nine hundred followers of Jim Jones (including many children) in Jonestown, Guyana (1978).

Such negative factors as these, indelibly linked as they are in the public consciousness to the cults, would rightfully deter most thinking persons from wanting to have anything to do with them. But the vital question that needs to be raised here is whether it is proper to use this term in describing the Bible Students. Or is this merely part of the general conspiracy of the orthodox clergy, as previously noted, to label unfairly a later-formed religious group because it teaches doctrines that differ from its own? Let us see.

In pursuing this matter, we will use the same criteria for cults as enumerated above and apply each one in turn to Pastor Russell and the Bible Students to determine if they match:

(a) Surely Pastor Russell could be described as having a dynamic and charismatic personality that caught the attention of others and enabled him to become a natural leader. But as pointed out earlier, the Pastor in all of his dealings was also noted for his humility, his kindness, his warmth and his sincerity. His genuine love and concern for the brethren was much appreciated and endeared him

greatly. His leadership role was recognized by all as benign and benevolent, and not at all as dictatorial or demanding. Honor and worship were to be directed exclusively to God and Christ; any special deference to himself was consistently discouraged. Instead of profiting financially, he exhausted all of his considerable means in advancing the work, “for the Lord, the Truth and the brethren.” All of this hardly adds up to the kind of person that would be considered a cult master, delighting to control and manipulate others.

(b) The Bible study groups organized by the Pastor in the United States and around the world, and as continuing today, are distinctive for their zeal in serving God and proclaiming the Gospel of the coming Kingdom. While setting spiritual goals of growth in grace and knowledge for themselves, they are not unmindful of their surroundings and endeavor to be helpful to their neighbors to the extent possible. In spreading the Bible message, Pastor Russell was said to do so “with charity toward all and malice toward none.”³ More recently in similar vein, the “Frank and Ernest” radio broadcast has been proclaiming the good news “in the spirit of tolerance and good will toward all.” Otherworldliness, aloofness or disregard for the welfare of others simply finds no place in their beliefs.

Bible Students also endeavor to be good citizens in willingly obeying the laws of the land and in giving due respect to those in elected office. They live in harmony with the teachings of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 13, detailing the Christian’s responsibility to obey the civil powers in the realization that these are ordained or permitted of God. They also occupy responsible positions in business, services and professions; they marry and support families, exercising their own judgment in these matters as guided by the Word of God. In all these activities, we find no basis for likening them to the regimented adherents of a cult group who are concerned primarily with that group’s own narrow interests even to the possible detriment of others around them.

(c) As to using deception, forcing surrender of assets, brainwashing, or other methods to gain absolute control of cult members, these techniques are completely foreign to the activities and thinking of Bible Students. The Bible alone is held up as their guide, and the appeal is to follow its inspired counsel in all matters pertaining

to life and godliness. The Scriptures depict God as saying, “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18), and the Apostle Paul urges the believer to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (1 Thess. 5:21)

To encourage the exercise of reasoning and one’s own thinking faculties is the very opposite of mind restriction or control. Bible Student meetings are patterned along democratic lines and are not intended to influence adversely or force views upon anyone. The study leaders encourage participation on the part of those present, and contrary thoughts are considered. In a visit to such a group in action, it would quickly become evident that there is no powerful leader in charge and that all are coming together simply to worship God and to grow in their knowledge of the Bible.

Very significantly, Pastor Russell himself set the tone for these study gatherings and the tolerant manner in which they were to be conducted. In 1904, he wrote: “There should be frequent regular meetings at which reasonably full opportunities would be given to anyone to present what he might believe to be a different view of truth from that perhaps generally held and approved by the Ecclesia.”⁴ What a dramatic contrast this poses to the style of a cult leader—or even to the pattern of operation of many respected churches of today!

Again, in all of this there is no lifestyle of cultist groups or nefarious methods to ensnare adherents and maintain control. Clearly, the meetings of the Bible Students are characterized by a warmth of spiritual fellowship and a democratic, open discussion of Bible topics where all are invited to take part. There are no requirements for attending and no restrictions on leaving. Financial contributions are strictly voluntary and no collections are taken. All that is asked is an interest in the Bible and a willingness to participate in an orderly manner in pursuing the study topics.

(d) The final point in the list of cult characteristics pertains to the mandatory breaking of all previous family ties and friendships. Certainly this is not applicable to the Bible Students, who firmly respect family relationships and maintain close friendships with those outside their fellowship as well. Such contacts afford the

opportunity to share their beliefs and are a normal part of their life-style.

In the light of this discussion, it becomes evident how unjust it is to categorize the Bible Students as a “cult” in the usual sense. However, in orthodox theological circles, there is a more specialized usage of the word as it is made to apply to religious groups who deviate from the established creedal concepts of Biblical Christianity. Walter Martin, leading orthodox spokesman against the cults, offers this definition:

“A cult, then, is a group of people polarized around someone’s interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, particularly the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ.”⁵

Again the effort is made to use the “cult” name-calling technique and scholarly language to dissuade honest Truth seekers from investigating the beliefs of “non-orthodox” groups. But no matter how cleverly it is phrased, such a definition clearly portrays the prejudice and narrow frame of reference of the propounder. Any challenge to “cardinal doctrines” of “orthodox Christianity” is simply not to be tolerated—meaning any views other than their own. In this regard, belief in the Incarnation and the Trinity is “particularly” underscored as being untouchable.

If we step back for a moment and take an unbiased look at this approach as to what constitutes a religious cult, it becomes evident how dictatorial, judgmental and unreasonable such a standard is. In our day of enlightenment, and especially in a nation such as the United States that was founded on the principles of religious liberty and freedom of thought, such infringements of the rights of others and branding as “cult” members those who differ in their interpretation of the Bible seem totally out of place. Apparently it is just too painful for these violently anti-Russell spokesmen to acknowledge the truth regarding the Bible Students: Though they are not a part of the larger Protestant churches, they are a legitimate Christian body of believers in every proper sense of the term.

It is interesting that the Bible tells of an apparent parallel to this situation in the days of the early Christian Church. At that time, the followers of Jesus were routinely called “the sect of the Nazarenes,” and it is noted that “everywhere ... [it was] spoken against.” (Acts 24:5; 28:22) The word “sect” is from the Greek *hairesis*, which usually means “party, school, or sect,” but it is thought that it quickly came to convey a reproach as it was applied to Christians.⁶ Thus, both then and now, the orthodox religious community was quick to condemn and name-call any group that did not conform to its established brand of belief.

In conclusion, it seems apparent that instead of being categorized as a “cult,” the Bible Students should simply be viewed for what they are—a small, independent group of zealous Christians holding forth the Word of life. Their outstanding trait is sharing the Truths that have thrilled their hearts. Their message is the good news of God’s coming Kingdom—the assurance that though “weeping may endure for a night ... joy cometh in the morning.” (Psa. 30:5)

Bedfellows with Freemasons?

The charge has been advanced that Pastor Russell and the Bible Students are connected with the Freemasons and that both groups are to be condemned because they are occultic in nature. The occult reference is used to describe both the secrecy aspect of their respective beliefs as well as the demonic.

One critic, Fritz Springmeier, unabashedly claims that “C. T. Russell was definitely a Mason” and lists thirty-five points that supposedly prove that much of the Pastor’s thinking and imagery was borrowed from them. Among the points Springmeier makes are that both the Bible Students and the Masons:

- ◆ Rely on the Great Pyramid for Truth
- ◆ Emphasize the name “Jehovah”
- ◆ Believe the Bible is written in code
- ◆ Are fascinated with numbers and their special meanings
- ◆ Rely heavily on Gnostic concepts of “revealed secrets”
- ◆ Use similar symbols, especially the “Cross and Crown” logo

◆ Meet in Masonic halls.⁷

The same critic also strongly implies that Pastor Russell was secretly “an important Satanist” and that “various items from magic were part of [his] religious beliefs, including the Winged-Sun-Disk” of ancient Egypt.⁸

These charges are either inferential in nature or totally false. This technique is an effort to emphasize some outward similarities without providing full analysis. It is not a valid form of reasoning and would prove guilt merely on the basis of weak circumstantial evidence. Once again, we will draw upon the actual facts, beginning with a brief description of the Masons.

The Masonic Order is an international organization with a long history going back to at least the twelfth century. It was originally connected with the art of building and adopted certain secretive and religious elements. It is generally thought of today as a fraternal and philanthropic organization, strongly supporting public education and various civic and charitable projects.⁹

It is not a religion but has deeply religious overtones incorporated in its rites and ceremonies. These represent a blending of concepts from major world religions.¹⁰ There has been a long history of mutual hostility between the Masonic Order and the Roman Catholic Church, with repeated official pronouncements against it from the Vatican. Relations have improved somewhat in recent years, and there has been some cooperation in mutual endeavors. But the Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations forbid or discourage Masonic affiliation.¹¹

The secrecy of Masonic ceremonies has given rise to fear and suspicion in various lands, and through the years accusations have been spread that the Masons practice magic, engage in evil and worship the Devil.¹² Though these charges are wholly unsubstantiated, the supposed connection still lingers in the minds of some people. Thus it becomes clear why critics of Pastor Russell would endeavor falsely to link him to Freemasonry. It would open the possibility that the Bible Students were covertly involved in Satanic worship and occultic activities.¹³ Nevertheless, we need to permit honesty and reason to prevail here as we explore the ramifications of this issue. Let us do three things:

1. Examine Pastor Russell's own statements regarding any possible Masonic connections.
2. Compare some of the underlying religious concepts and philosophy of Freemasonry with the beliefs of the Bible Students.
3. Take a close look at some of the "mystic tokens" that supposedly have been adopted by the Bible Students.

With this evidence in hand, the reader will be enabled to appreciate the lack of understanding and the falsity of the charges being made.

THE PASTOR'S COMMENTS. We turn first to the Pastor's own words. In his *Scripture Studies* series he wrote:

"Is it right for [the New Creation] to be members of [various orders and] societies? We answer that while Church associations are purely religious, and labor and beneficial organizations in general are purely secular, there are still other orders which combine the religious and the secular features. As we understand the matter, for instance, the Free Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, etc., perform certain rites and ceremonies of a religious kind ... We admonish the New Creation to have nothing whatever to do with any of these semi-religious societies, clubs, orders, churches; but to 'Come out from amongst them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.' (2 Cor. 6:17)" ¹⁴

Even earlier he had expressed his overall disapproval of such secret, semi-religious societies:

"So far as we can judge, there is a certain amount of [simulated] worship or mummery connected with the rites of this order [Free Masonry] and some others, which the members do not comprehend, but which, in many cases, serves to satisfy the cravings of the natural mind for worship, and thus hinders it from seeking the worship of God in spirit and in truth—through Christ, the only appointed Mediator and Grand Master.

"In proportion as such societies consume valuable time in foolish, senseless rites and ceremonies, and in substituting ... words and symbols which have no meaning to

them, for the [true] worship ... in that proportion these societies are grievous evils ...

“Wherever oaths of secrecy are demanded, it is safe for God’s people to touch not, taste not, handle not ... St. James cautions against all binding oaths, such as many Secret Societies demand ... (James 5:12)”¹⁵

Finally, the clearest expression of Pastor Russell’s own non-involvement with secret societies is found in his reference to a letter sent to him from a reader of his journal. This reader identified himself as a “fellow-worker” in the Harvest and a former Mason of over twenty years’ association, who had gained the position of “Worshipful Master.” In making the letter public, Pastor Russell introduced it in the following way:

“A brother, once very deep in Secretism, and who knows that the Editor has had no such experience, writes as follows: [The entire letter followed.]”¹⁶

Here then is an unambiguous statement by the Pastor that he had never been a part of any secret society such as the Masons, which was the main subject of the letter. This quotation would normally be thought of as sufficient to settle the matter, except for a remark made by the Pastor in a discourse given in 1913. If taken out of context without reading his explanation, it seems to contradict all that we have said thus far. His words were: “I am a **free** Mason ... I am not going to say a word against Free Masons.”¹⁷

However, as one reads his elaboration that follows, it turns out that he was giving a discourse on “the Temple of God” in a hall that had been rented from the Masons, and was merely using figurative language to express some limited similarity with that group. He had begun the discourse by stating that the Bible Students were a Christian group and, as such, had certain points of faith in sympathy and harmony with every denomination.

The Pastor then went on to detail the preparation of the Spiritual Temple in which the Masons were ostensibly interested. This consisted of the true followers of Christ who are selected out of the world during the Gospel Age as the masonry of “living stones,” chiseled and polished for their respective places in God’s symbolic

Temple. Throughout his discourse, he made an effort to reach out to the Masons in the audience by using terms and expressions that would be familiar to them. At one point he said:

“We of the Free and Accepted Order of Masons of the Lord Jesus Christ’s Commandery have the very highest standard, and ours is not the cross that is on the head of the sword, but ours is the cross of Christ.”¹⁸

Here is his explanation of how true believers could be thought of as “free Masons”:

“We are free, my dear brethren ... free from [sin], free from the domination of sin, free from ... that condition of sin and death in which we once were ... The shackles have fallen off. If the Son makes you free, then are ye free indeed. And thus every man made free by the Lord Jesus Christ, through the merit of his sacrifice, in thus presenting his body a living sacrifice and being received of God and inducted fully into this Masonic Fraternity, into this Masonry of the highest order, into this Royal Priesthood, happy is his position, for the spirit of Glory and of God rests on him.”¹⁹

In these comments and from the other language the Pastor employed in sketching the Biblical picture of the spiritual Temple in process of development (see 1 Corinthians 3:9-11), it is abundantly clear that his talk was designed to be especially appealing to the Masons, whose very existence as a group was related to the building arts. From this standpoint, his remarks are not to be interpreted as implying that either he or the Bible Students were associated with that group. To the contrary, it is evident that he was appealing to their spiritual senses and showing that there was a much higher calling to which they would also have the privilege of responding.

COMPARISON OF BELIEFS. Now let us go on to a more detailed look at the religious overtones of Freemasonry. Underlying these is their objective of providing a universal belief system embodying high ideals of charity, equality and morality.²⁰ Nevertheless, there are some important differences between Masonic religious elements and the beliefs of conservative Christianity. A

helpful perspective is provided by *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* and can be summarized as follows:²¹

(a) Freemasonry de-emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ. The enlightenment of Masonic teachings and accompanying good works are the only prerequisites “to ascend to the Grand Lodge Above,” without the necessity of acknowledging Christ as Lord and Saviour.

(b) Freemasonry sets forth “a common denominator” god who is not limited to the Judeo-Christian definition of a unique Supreme Being above all others. Rather, its “ever-living, true God” may incorporate elements of belief from ancient Assyria, Egypt, India and other non-Biblical sources.

(c) Freemasonry does not accord the Bible chief place in its belief system, even though the Book may be on display at meetings. [In Britain and the United States, a copy of the Volume of the Sacred Law (which may be the Bible, Koran, Vedas, or any other sacred religious book) must lie open during proceedings.²²] Thus even when used, the Bible is regarded as but one of the various “holy” books of world religions and as merely a part of “God’s [whole] revelation.”

(d) A candidate for initiation as a Mason is portrayed as one “in a state of darkness” who will be enlightened by the revelations of knowledge he will receive which are unattainable elsewhere.

On all of these points, the Bible Students, in harmony with other conservative Christians, hold clear differences with the Masons. In the same order as listed above, the Bible Students teach:

(a) That Jesus’ ransom sacrifice is the center of God’s Plan for the salvation of the human race, since the Bible plainly states that “there is none other name under heaven given among men [besides Jesus], whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

(b) That a “common denominator” god incorporating elements from various pagan religions is a concept foreign to Bible teaching; the true, eternal God has revealed Himself in His written Word, the Bible, and not through a mixture of other philosophies or beliefs. (Isa. 8:20)

(c) That the Bible must be distinguished from all other books; it alone is the holy, inspired Word of God and serves a unique role as the source of all religious Truth. (2 Tim. 3:15,16)

(d) That spiritual enlightenment is gained from a personal relationship with God through the working of the Holy Spirit and study of the Bible. It is not dependent upon any human organization or attainments conferred through secret ceremonies and binding oaths. Only by faith in Christ and full consecration to the Heavenly Father can one be accepted into the family of God. Understanding of the deep things previously hidden thereupon opens up to all who are thus walking in His pathway. (1 Cor. 2:9,10; Col. 1:26,27)

Whereas the above comparison shows significant differences between the Bible Students and Freemasonry, there is yet another point that should be mentioned. In an effort to form a fraternity of men of various religious persuasions, Freemasonry requires all prospective candidates to attest specifically to two religious tenets: (1) Belief in a Supreme Being, and (2) Belief in the Immortality of the soul.²³ This second item distinguishes the Bible Students yet further, since they believe that the hope of a future life is based on the Resurrection of the dead, not on the possession of an Immortal soul. Bible Student understanding on this subject has been detailed more fully in Chapter 5 of this presentation.

In the light of this analysis, it may be seen how far fetched is the charge that Bible Students are related to the Freemasons in their religious beliefs or practices. The gap between these groups is just too great to permit such characterization.

USE OF MYSTIC SYMBOLS. If the foregoing conclusion is correct, how do we explain the apparent adoption of certain “mystic tokens” by the Bible Students, including the Cross and Crown? In this regard, Randall Watters charges:

“It is known that Russell admired secret societies, especially the Masons. It is hardly a coincidence that one of his pet emblems, the cross and crown, was none other than the Knights Templar logo of the Masonic Lodge ...

“Russell was [also] fond of using the ‘winged disk’ of the sun god, Ra, revealing his fascination with Egyptian religion and mysteries. He placed this emblem on the covers of his *Studies in the Scriptures*.”²⁴

Once again we have a mixture of presumptive and completely false statements. We have already seen that Pastor Russell was not an admirer of secret societies and strongly counseled against participating in them. As for the Cross and Crown symbol, this was hardly distinctive, either to the Bible Students or to the Masons. If Pastor Russell was fond of this symbol, he had a lot of company: Both Catholic and Protestant churches had universally adopted the Cross and Crown and used it for centuries as a Christian emblem depicting the final reward of the faithful believer.²⁵

In Bible Student usage, a Cross and Crown symbol appeared for the first time on the cover of the *Watch Tower* magazine for January 1891 and continued to be displayed until 1931. At first there was no natural wreath encircling the Cross and Crown, merely an artistic geometric pattern.²⁶ Later, beginning January 1, 1895, a band of greenery was added, giving the wreath the distinctive appearance it has today, as frequently used on Bible Student convention programs and letterheads.²⁷ Since it never was unique to the Masons, its adoption by the Bible Students carries no significance in relating it to that group (or any other group, for that matter).

Bible Student meaning for the Cross and Crown is taken from the Scriptures where both symbols are given a prominent place. The cross, besides being the instrument used in the death of Christ, is also a metaphor of the trials and persecutions of the believer. (See Matt. 16:24.) The crown is frequently used as a symbol of the glory, honor and immortality granted to Christ and his church for faithfulness in serving God. (See Rev. 3:21; 2:10.) The Bible also makes it clear that gaining the crown is dependent upon bearing the cross faithfully even unto death. (See James 1:12.) The poem, “No Cross, No Crown,” emphasizing this point, appeared in the July 1, 1911 issue of the *Watch Tower*. This again is not a concept unique to Bible Students and may be found in church hymnology dating back to at least the eighteenth century.²⁸ And finally, the wreath encircling the Cross and Crown symbol is taken as a sign of victory. Its use in crowning the winners in the Greek games is directly alluded to in 1 Corinthians 9:25.

Similar Biblical basis is seen for the Winged-Sun-Disk design, which though of ancient origin, became popular in the early

twentieth century and was even adopted by an automobile manufacturer.²⁹ The Bible Students took it as a fitting symbol to portray the events expected to occur at the start of the Millennial day: “The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2), referring to Messiah’s role as earth’s new ruler in the Kingdom, to bring blessings to all the families of the earth. For a time beginning in 1911, the winged disk was used as a design on the covers of the *Studies in the Scriptures* series, but it is certain that no reference to the primitive Egyptian sun god Ra was ever intended. Pastor Russell was always firmly opposed to all forms of occultism, as will be discussed in greater detail in the section on Pyramidology later in this chapter; and he never knowingly employed any mystic symbols in his ministry and teachings.

CONCLUSION. We have touched on some of the outward similarities of Bible Students and Freemasons and clearly seen that a valid case for linking them together cannot be made. Even the fact that sometimes the Bible Students meet in Masonic halls is irrelevant since they also meet in churches, YMCAs, schools, public auditoriums, conference centers and private homes where suitable accommodations may be available. The bottom line here is that there is no basis for ascribing occultic beliefs or practices to Pastor Russell and his followers (or seemingly to the Masons).

The Pastor a Fraud and False Prophet?

Many of the allegations made against Pastor Russell under this category are sweeping and all inclusive in tone. Rev. Walter Martin and Rev. Norman Klann make no apologies in asserting:

“[There is] vast documentary evidence [that] definitely reveals beyond a shadow of reasonable doubt the faulty character of [Charles Taze Russell—] one of the greatest religious charlatans and frauds ever to masquerade as a minister of the gospel.”³⁰

However, upon examination, the “vast documentary evidence” turns out to be essentially the prejudicial views of one newspaper, the Brooklyn *Eagle*, and the malicious assaults of the Pastor’s arch enemy, the Rev. J. J. Ross of Hamilton, Ontario, as discussed in Chapter 7. The attacks of the Brooklyn *Eagle* against Pastor Russell

stood in sharp contrast to the overwhelming support given by hundreds of newspapers (and their readers) across the country, as demonstrated by carrying his weekly syndicated sermons, detailed accounts of his debates and world tours, and willingness in many areas to circulate his special sermons and tracts as supplements to the Sunday editions. The Rev. J. J. Ross indeed initiated many wild, slanderous charges, but none proved of any substance as we have already noted.

Thus, it is unconscionable for allegations of this magnitude to be made by responsible individuals and particularly by members of the clergy, whose actions and words seem unbefitting of their own calling. Sadly, this inevitably leads us to suspect ulterior motives and a general conspiracy on the part of such to continue in defaming an outstanding messenger of God and doing their utmost to detract from his ministry.

In refreshing contrast to Martin and Klann's distorted assessment of Pastor Russell's character as "faulty" and his role as a gross "religious charlatan and fraud," the historian M. James Penton provides an entirely different evaluation. He describes the Pastor as:

"Basically honest even when ... misguided. In fact, his personal life was generally free from blemish. Furthermore, he was generally an attractive, kindly man, who was completely devoted to the stewardship which he believed to be his ... He was sometimes guileless to the point of naiveté ... In spite of [some] real shortcomings, in comparing him with [a number of other prominent] nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American religious leaders [who founded new churches and denominations] ... Russell's character fares rather well."³¹

Turning now to a more focused effort to criticize the Pastor, we note that many of his detractors label him as a false prophet. They base this on Pastor Russell's interest in Bible prophecy and his pinpointing an actual date for the deliverance of the church and the establishment of God's long promised Kingdom on earth. For some twenty-five years he had predicted the climax of these events to occur in the year 1914, and unquestionably there was great

disappointment when it did not. But is this just cause for labeling him a false prophet? Josh McDowell, popular defender of orthodox Christianity, certainly thinks so:

“The prophecies made by Russell and the Watchtower concerning 1914 totally failed because the Kingdom of God was not established upon the earth ... The Watchtower is guilty of false prophecy ... [as well as] anti-biblical theology, and misrepresentation of the truth.”³²

This accusation is very troubling, in that it unfairly selects merely the Pastor for such labeling and conveniently overlooks a host of other Godly expositors of the past who also attempted to predict end-time events but failed in their sincere efforts. Historian Leroy Froom points out that at the dawn of the nineteenth century, there was a remarkable revival of interest in end-time prophecies of the Bible that spread across the spectrum of church denominations, both in this country and abroad. Many expositors shared the results of their studies and began to project dates for the fulfillment of specific time prophecies and the start of the Millennium and the return of Christ. Such men as Aaron Kinne, a Congregational clergyman; John G. Schmucker, an Evangelical Lutheran pastor; Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples Church; and A. L. Crandall, a minister from New York, incorrectly anticipated dates from 1847 to 1868 and beyond. Yet all were respected as scholars of the church and their various contributions lauded.³³

In our day, there are other examples of end-time prophetic date settings ending in disappointments that can also be cited. Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth* and other best selling prophetic books, and Collin H. Deal, author of *Will Christ Return by 1988?*, both predicted the Second Advent would occur in 1988 (though for different reasons); and Harold Camping, director of the Family Radio network, pinpointed the year 1994. Yet despite the failure of their predictions, these were not widely condemned in ecclesiastical circles as being false prophets and generally continued to be held in high esteem.³⁴

Regarding the year 1914, there were actually two events that the Pastor expected to take place then—the ending of the “Times of the Gentiles” prophecy, as well as the glorification of the church.

Bible Students are convinced that the outbreak of an unprecedented world war in that year confirmed the first part of this expectation, and that the Gentile lease of power or Divine permission to rule the world had come to a close. A wide range of secular authorities have likewise pinpointed 1914 as a unique year in human history: *The Scientific Monthly* (July 1951) called it a “turning point” in our day; Barbara Tuchman (in *The Guns of August*), “one of the great convulsions of history”; the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Jan. 27, 1980), the start of “a cruel and perhaps terminal illness”; Rowse (in *Oxford Historian and Biographer*), “the end of an era and the beginning of another”; and Edmond Taylor (in *The Fall of Dynasties*, quoting Arnold Toynbee), the start of “a twentieth-century ‘Time of Troubles’ ... from which our civilization has by no means yet emerged.”³⁵

Pastor Russell must be given the credit for anticipating that year as the closing of an old order and the start of the birth pangs that would lead to a new world based on his study of Bible prophecies. From that time forward the Gentile nations were being evicted and would face collapse in the Armageddon struggle to follow. As noted in greater detail earlier, man’s extremity in this troublous period would but lead to God’s open intervention and the full establishment of His long promised Kingdom.

Regarding the second part of his expectation for the year 1914, the Pastor freely admitted his error. In 1916, in the same month in which he passed away, he commented in the Forewords to his *Studies in the Scriptures* as follows:

“The work of Harvest has progressed and is still progressing—even though at one time we supposed that the Harvest work would have been fully accomplished with the ending of the Times of the Gentiles. That was merely a supposition, which proved to be without warrant, for the thrusting in of the sickle of Truth and the gathering in of the ripe grain has been progressing since October, 1914, as never before.”³⁶

“Dealing with subjects so difficult that they are rarely touched by others, it is not to be considered strange if some of the suggestions made ... have not been

fulfilled with absolute accuracy to the very letter ... The Lord overruled [our mistake] for the blessing of His people. The thought that the Church would all be gathered to glory before October, 1914, certainly did have a very stimulating and sanctifying effect upon thousands, all of whom accordingly can praise the Lord—even for the mistake. Many ... [are] thankful ... that the culmination of the Church's hopes was not reached at the time we expected; and that we, as the Lord's people, have further opportunities of perfecting holiness and of being participators with our Master in the further presentation of His Message to His people.”³⁷

It is evident that Pastor Russell was content to let the matter rest in the hands of the Lord. He had given the subject his best judgment and erred in part of his expectation of prophetic fulfillments in 1914. Yet he could see the good that had resulted regardless and therefore could rejoice in the Lord's providence in overruling the error. We submit that such thoughtful reflection and the spirit of acquiescence to the will of God that it represents are most commendable and would seem to further demonstrate the inappropriateness of using this incident as the basis for condemning the Pastor as a false prophet.

A Braggart and Egotist?

A strong criticism of Pastor Russell that has remained undiminished through the years strikes directly at his personality and alleged super egotism. Martin and Klann charge:

“Psychologically, the man was an egotist whose imagination knew no bounds and who is classed (by his followers) along with St. Paul, Wycliff and Luther as a great expounder of the gospel. These are trite words for a man who proffered his writings as necessary for a clear understanding of the Scriptures and who once declared that it would be better to leave the Scriptures unread and read his books, rather than read the Scriptures and neglect his books.”³⁸

Taken at face value, this certainly seems to be a stunning denunciation of Pastor Russell and his supposed deluded followers

who would place such undue reliance upon his writings. But is this criticism warranted when the facts of the case are known and the broader issue of Bible interpretation is evaluated? Let us see.

BEREAN STUDIES. Much of the controversy centers about a special article that the Pastor wrote in 1910, entitled “Is the Reading of ‘Scripture Studies’ Bible Study?” In it he discusses whether it was more profitable to engage in free, independent study using the Bible alone or to use his textbooks as study guides, in what came to be known as “Berean studies.” His *Scripture Studies* series in six volumes and another on the Tabernacle were conveniently arranged in topical form with abundant Bible proof texts given, so that the Pastor considered them “practically the Bible ... in an arranged form.” He was convinced that his Volumes “are not merely comments on the Bible, but [that] they are practically the Bible itself, since there is no desire to build any doctrine or thought on any individual preference or on any individual wisdom, but to present the entire matter on the lines of the Word of God.”³⁹

To his mind, there was a distinct disadvantage in using the Bible by itself in individual or group study of the Word of God. He lamented that despite the many years that such study was carried on in the past, the beauty of the Divine Plan of the ages had never been uncovered. Now that it was the Lord’s due time to reveal His Truth, he reasoned, and had done so in the *Scripture Studies* arrangement, it was to be guarded and preserved diligently and not carelessly treated even by Bible study that was not purposeful to this end.

It was his topical approach to study, his dispensational view of God’s dealings with mankind and his harmonization of every appropriate Bible text that proved so helpful. “We ... think it safe to follow this kind of reading, this kind of instruction, this kind of Bible study.”⁴⁰ It gave a powerful force to the Bible’s teachings and a comprehensive enlightenment of God’s Plan and character that had not readily been appreciated before. Such an understanding he feared was in danger of being lost if this arrangement of Scriptures were abandoned in favor of “free” Bible study. Thus he was convinced that the method of “Berean Studies” was the best way to preserve these Truths and highly recommended its adoption by all Bible Student congregations.

In this regard, it is interesting to note historian Timothy White's reaction to these thoughts of the Pastor. He wrote:

"Some of the above statements will seem egotistical. But we must read them with an understanding of the tremendous emotional impact the revelation of the divine plan had on Russell ... The divine plan 'satisfied his longings as nothing [else] could do,' as his favorite hymn put it ... There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that the divine plan, as he understood it, was true. He fell into the fault we are all guilty of, of thinking that what is emotionally satisfying to us is satisfying to any other normal person too. He became overly dogmatic ..."⁴¹

Timothy White also observed that the conviction that the Harvest of the age had begun and that the culmination would occur in 1914 gave further impetus to the Pastor's view on the importance of Berean studies. He wrote, "he was willing to reason from this precarious foundation [his perceived shortness of the time remaining] rather than from his more solidly based reasoning against sectarianism [as his strong recommendation might be viewed today]."⁴² He then concluded by saying:

"On this question of Berean Bible Study, therefore, Russell's usual broadmindedness and consistency lapsed ... Russell, with his constantly careful thinking, was rarely guilty of shallowness and inconsistency. But he was so on the question of Free Bible Study."⁴³

Whereas we do not necessarily agree with this analysis, we do think the author correctly sensed the tremendous impact that an understanding of the Divine Plan had made upon Pastor Russell. It was such a satisfying revelation that he felt compelled to share the results of his studies, and the method of study that led to the enlightenment, with all other believers. And since this was all embodied in the "Berean Studies" format, he could do no better than to recommend it strongly to all the brethren.

The historian Penton comments on the Pastor's characterization of his *Scripture Studies* as "practically the Bible topically arranged," as "a gross overstatement, and one for which he has been

severely censured.” Nevertheless, he points out that Pastor Russell “left each and every ecclesia free to decide which system [‘free Bible study’ or his Berean Study method] it would adopt. His power was suasive rather than coercive, in sharp contrast to the present policy of the Watch Tower Society [as well as many other denominations today].”⁴⁴

BIBLE SUPREME. At this point we would suggest that to maintain proper perspective in this matter, we need to keep in mind that the Pastor was not advocating using his books as a replacement for the Bible. In the same article that analyzed Bible study, he also wrote:

“The six volumes of *Scripture Studies* are not intended to supplant the Bible ... Our thought, therefore, is that these *Scripture Studies* are a great assistance, a very valuable help, in the understanding of God’s Word ... Before we would accept anything as being our own personal faith and conviction, we should say, ‘I will not take it because these studies say so; I wish to see what the Bible says.’ And so we would study the Scriptures in the light of these *Scripture Studies*; we would prove every point, or disprove it, as the case might be. We would be satisfied with nothing less than a thorough investigation of the Bible from this standpoint ... The Scriptures are the standard, and ... it would be with a view to discerning whether or not we had been mistaken.”⁴⁵

Some years earlier the Pastor had written in his journal:

“Nor would we have our writings revered or regarded as infallible, or on a par with the holy Scriptures. The most we claim or have ever claimed for our teachings is, that they are **what we believe to be harmonious interpretations of the divine Word**, in harmony with the spirit of the truth. And we still urge, as in the past, that each reader study the subjects we present in the light of the Scriptures, proving all things by the Scriptures, accepting what they see to be thus approved, and rejecting all else. It is to this end, to enable the student to trace the subject in the divinely

inspired Record, that we so freely intersperse both quotations and citations of the Scriptures upon which to build.”⁴⁶

This, we believe, provides the balance in recognizing that only the Bible is the truly inspired Word of God, while acknowledging the valuable place the *Scripture Studies* hold in revealing the majesty and beauty of the Divine Plan. Where else are such perplexing subjects as Ransom and Restitution, the permission of evil, the character of the Judgment Day, the two distinct salvations, the Kingdom hope and a host of other topics so reasonably and clearly presented? No wonder it would lead the Pastor to conclude his article with both a powerful challenge and words of advice:

“Now is it possible to find any other Bible study that would accomplish so much for us ... ? If there is we ought to take it. If there is not, then we have our option.”⁴⁷

HUMBLE MANNER. Also directly contrary to the charge of Pastor Russell’s being a braggart and self-centered egotist is the widely acknowledged humble deportment which he displayed both in public and private. Despite his zeal and dynamic leadership of a fast-growing religious movement, historian Penton says he was noted “for his warmth and personal kindness” and “refused to regard himself as a prophet or a divinely inspired person in any sense.”⁴⁸

Further, the Pastor actively attempted to dissuade others from giving him undue or excessive honor, and in 1896 wrote:

“As we have been to some extent, by the grace of God, used in the ministry of the Gospel, it may not be out of place to say here what we have frequently said in private, and previously in these columns,—namely, that while we appreciate the love, sympathy, confidence and fellowship of fellow-servants and of the entire household of faith, we want no homage, no reverence, for ourselves or our writings; nor do we wish to be called Reverend or Rabbi. Nor do we wish that any should be called by our name.”⁴⁹

Time and again he disavowed any special ability on his part in revealing the Divine Plan, but merely acknowledged it was God's due time for such understanding to come. He was merely, "as a faithful student of the Word," used of God "to be an index finger" to help others "trace ... on the sacred page, the wonderful plan of God." And he freely admitted that his work was less as an original discoverer of Bible Truth than as a compiler building upon the efforts of earlier devout and sincere expositors of the Word.⁵⁰

The Pastor was also appreciative of receiving honest criticism and corrections of his writings, when such proved needful. In 1899, one such occasion saw him responding to a letter sent to him in the spirit of love and humility to point out several errors of a scientific nature that had crept into his writings. After acknowledging his mistakes and thanking the writer for his corrections, he wrote:

"Fortunately, dear Brother, the Editor has never laid claim to **infallibility** on scientific or other matters. He is on the contrary pleased to have honest criticism from any quarter—appreciating it specially when it comes from 'brethren' and in a brotherly, loving spirit ... The Editor can scarcely hope that these ... are the only errors and 'slips' of his pen, in the publications of the past twenty years, and requests that if you or other readers note other errors worthy of correction you will kindly communicate them."⁵¹

DELUDED FOLLOWERS? Finally, let us turn to the question of whether the Bible Students have been overly influenced into giving undue reliance to the writings of their founder. In expressing this charge, the anti-Russell forces make it sound like a holy indictment applicable to just this group. However, any fair-minded assessment of Bible study practices in the major Christian denominations betrays the hypocrisy of the charge. It is simply common practice for church members to rely upon the studious works of such men as Cyrus Scofield, Dwight L. Moody, Charles G. Finney, Haddon Spurgeon, Billy Graham and a host of others. Each denomination has its favorite leaders and would not seriously study the Bible without the benefit of their writings. It is also common knowledge that Catholic translations of the Bible are designed to carry footnotes

that provide the reader with the official interpretation for any doubtful texts. Thus, to give the impression that the Bible Students are especially deluded in giving weight to their founder's comments seems grossly overstated and hypocritical.

Loose in Morals?

The single most distressing of the various sensational attacks made against Pastor Russell is that of alleged sexual misconduct, a charge that strikes to the heart of his Christian character and integrity. For one so completely devoted to serving God and so totally immersed in spiritual interests, it is devastating and libelous to the highest degree possible. But this is precisely what the Pastor's enemies would hope to accomplish in an effort to tarnish the reputation of this man of God and dissuade any who might be drawn to his teachings.

VARIOUS CHARGES. Insinuations of promiscuous behavior originated with the testimony of Maria Russell at the separation trial, as already noted and considered in the previous chapter. Despite presentation of convincing evidence of the Pastor's highest moral standing both in public and private, grounds for suspicion were inadvertently laid when the trial resulted in granting Maria's wish for a legal separation. No proof of adultery had been offered, nor was any such charge even made; yet as historian Timothy White observed:

“The tracts of many Churches against Russell imply that the ground of divorce [technically, a legal separation] was adultery with members of his congregation, which was simply untrue.”⁵²

Few could have imagined, however, the extent to which this original charge would multiply through ensuing years as opponents of the Pastor outdid each other in conjuring up additional wild scenarios of alleged sexual improprieties. These are now featured on the Internet, along with caricatures and distorted photos of the Pastor, to present an evil and fiendish appearance wholly contrary to his distinguished, saint-like countenance especially in his mature years. It has well been stated in an old proverb: “A lie will travel around the world while the truth is getting her boots on.”

One critic in particular, Barbara G. Harrison, stands out for outlining a whole litany of supposed sexual indiscretions on the part of the Pastor. Writing in a style that many consider talented and entertaining, she intersperses humor with matters of serious consequence, relating details of her own life and her unhappy experiences in the religious group which she and her mother had joined. She manages to present her views in a believable and effective manner—until they are carefully examined. Her charges against Pastor Russell are mainly suggestive, including adultery, intimations of child molestation and of running a harem at the Bethel Home, and ending with his requiring treatment for syphilis.⁵³

It is difficult to imagine any author coming up with such a barrage of serious charges, unless backed up with solid substantiating evidence. Regarding her final anecdote of the Pastor's contracting syphilis, she reluctantly admits, "I have no way of knowing whether this is true."⁵⁴[!] That is straightforward enough, but are there really credible grounds for any of her charges?

To the casual reader, the fact that the book was her autobiography and she had personally worked at the Bethel Home would seem to give validity to her statements regarding Pastor Russell. However, it should be noted that her three-year stay at Bethel as a housekeeper occurred not in Pastor Russell's day but well beyond even the time of his successor. Thus her observations concerning Bethel would not even remotely reflect activities and conditions there during the Pastor's time. She was born in 1934—almost twenty years after the Pastor's death—and hence had no first-hand information to pass on to her readers.⁵⁵ All she can offer are what appear to be second- and third-hand slighting remarks, plus unproved insinuations made by Mrs. Russell at the divorce trial and appeal. Ms. Harrison's writings and embellishments about the Pastor may provide entertainment for her readers, but do they uphold common standards of truth, fairness and decency? Let us examine some of her statements in more detail to see what they may reveal.

She begins with a surprising, all-inclusive condemnation of the Pastor by stating that he was "sexually and sensationally peccant." The word "peccant" is defined by Funk and Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary as "guilty of sin; sinful; corrupt and offensive."

This is a strong indictment indeed, but we have already seen that no court of law ever charged him in such a manner, nor did his wife. For fifteen years she loyally defended his upright character and even at the separation trial never made accusations of that kind. Hence, right at the start we are left wondering what basis Ms. Harrison might have to form such a strong judgment.

Her next allegation is to the “jellyfish story” that caused such a sensation at the Russell court trial and has already been covered in some detail in Chapter 7. But as mentioned there, the accusation could not be verified and the judge did not allow it to stand as credible testimony. Such alleged conduct at most could only be considered as flirtation, and thus hardly qualifies as being described as “peccant.”

This is followed by repeating Mrs. Russell’s charges of improprieties with a young orphan girl named Rose Ball who lived with the Russells, but now implying that child molestation was involved. Whereas the incident was also covered earlier, we will take it up again to bring out some additional points. Ms. Harrison’s lurid summary of Mrs. Russell’s complaint was to the effect that “he admitted ... kissing and dandling [her] on his knee,” but there is no mention of the Pastor’s side of the story. His explanation, under oath, was simply that he was consoling the girl in a fatherly way to make up for her complaints of receiving harsh treatment from Mrs. Russell; whereupon, it was Rose who suddenly dried her tears and gave the Pastor an appreciative kiss.⁵⁶

It is worthwhile noting at this point that Mrs. Russell at the trial gave every appearance of casting “Rose” as “the other woman,” and that it was the Pastor who pointed out that she was a child. Had Mrs. Russell intended to convey that the Pastor had molested a child—which would have been a “bombshell” accusation—surely she would have testified to that effect in court. Mrs. Russell attempted to transform the fatherly affection and comfort given to a child, into illicit attention toward a woman. No accusation of child-molestation ever surfaced in the Pastor’s own day; it is rather the product of newer fertile imaginations.

Subsequent events seem to bear out the Pastor’s side of this incident. Rose could not be called upon as a witness in the

separation trial to give her own account because she was in Australia at the time. In the years following the original incident, she had grown up and eventually married E. C. Henninges, a close confidante of the Pastor who became branch manager of the Watch Tower work in Australia. But in 1909 the Henninges split from the Pastor over a doctrinal issue and joined others in America to spearhead the “New Covenant” movement. An astute observer writes:

“While they attacked CTR’s [Charles T. Russell’s] beliefs on certain aspects of doctrine and managed to win over some of his ‘followers’ to their own movement—they never ever to my knowledge used any experiences of Rose Ball in their arguments. Had she been molested by him and kept quiet for the ‘sake of the truth [movement]’ any reasons for silence (other than CTR’s innocence) were removed from 1909 onwards. And she would have known all about the charge—it was featured prominently enough in the July 15, 1906 issue of Russell’s *Zion’s Watch Tower* magazine ... [Hence] those who could have made great capital out of any misconduct of CTR, those who actually had the star witness on their side, apparently did not do so.”⁵⁷

Returning now to Ms. Harrison’s series of charges, her final intimation was that the Pastor ran “a harem” at the Bethel Home and subsequently sought treatment for syphilis. The “harem” rumor, flatly denied by the Pastor, was attributed to the *Eagle* newspaper in Brooklyn, which we have already seen was carrying on a kind of vendetta against Pastor Russell and could hardly be expected to present an unbiased account. As for the syphilis story, it was offered to the writer after one of her lectures by a stranger who had introduced himself as a retired physician. But even Ms. Harrison admits she has no way of proving the account true. It is noteworthy to add to this a reaction from yet another physician, a doctor in contemporary practice. When he heard the story, he remarked that he “wouldn’t take an unsubstantiated third-hand anecdote like that too seriously! (If a physician was really going to break his oath of confidentiality, I think he would have done it long before meeting Ms. Harrison!)”⁵⁸

Here we will pause for a moment of reflection to leave it up to our readers to determine if any of the foregoing charges were based on solid evidence or offer grounds of credible belief. But before leaving Ms. Harrison's book, we think it appropriate to examine some of the other remarks she makes in the same chapter of her work that deals with the alleged sexual improprieties of the Pastor. We were surprised to find a number of erroneous statements concerning related factual matters. Notice the following expressions:

1. "Charles Taze Russell—who founded the Society of Bible Students."⁵⁹

2. "With the accrual of property came ... discord with his wife, the coeditor of the *Herald*."⁶⁰

3. "In 1909 she [Mrs. Russell] appealed for an increase in alimony, and Russell moved out of the jurisdiction of the Pittsburgh courts, transferred his assets to the Watch Tower Society, declared himself penniless, and moved his staff and his operations to Brooklyn to avoid being jailed for failure to pay alimony."⁶¹

In regard to Point No. 1, it should be noted that Pastor Russell founded "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" in 1881, a name that later was changed to "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society." It was never called the "Society of Bible Students." Regarding Point No. 2, whereas it is true that Mrs. Russell for a time was associate editor of the Society's magazine, *Zion's Watch Tower*, it was never called the *Herald* and she was never "coeditor."

Ms. Harrison's statement in Point No. 3 gives the impression that Mrs. Russell's request for increased alimony prompted the Pastor to move his operations out of state. But is this true? The facts of the case seem to suggest otherwise. The Brooklyn property was purchased in 1908, prior to the date alluded to by Ms. Harrison, because the Bible House in Allegheny had become too small. The larger quarters were needed to house the staff and conduct the expanding work of the organization, and a larger, better-known city such as Brooklyn (known as "The City of Churches") would be a most suitable center for sending out the newspaper sermons and conducting the Harvest work. After months of extensive repairs and remodeling, the structure that had earlier served as a mission of the nearby Plymouth Congregational Church was renamed "The

Brooklyn Tabernacle” and opened for Bible Student services on January 31, 1909.⁶²

What might these misstatements signify, and what bearing do they have on the subject at hand? Ms. Harrison may well be a popular author with a captivating style of writing. But the foregoing does seem to raise some question as to her command of the facts and her accuracy of reporting. Might there also be some prejudice here that could have affected the quality of her judgment and fairness toward those being discussed in her narrative?

An observation concerning this fairness issue has also been made by historian James Penton, who comments on an earlier work by this same author in these words: “Unfortunately, while producing an exceptionally important work, Harrison is at times somewhat unfair in her description of certain individuals, such as the Watch Tower’s first president [Pastor Russell].”⁶³

Along similar lines, some might be inclined to go even further and characterize Ms. Harrison’s latest presentation regarding the Pastor as “grossly unfair.” Once again, we will leave this in the hands of the reader to decide.

A HELPFUL OBSERVATION. At this point we think it helpful to call attention to a fundamental line of reasoning that provides some perspective to this whole issue of Pastor Russell’s moral integrity. It comes from a surprising source, namely David A. Reed, who is a consistently hard critic of the Pastor on almost every other ground. Yet on this issue he demonstrates a lot of common sense which many of the Pastor’s antagonists would do well to emulate. He writes concerning the Pastor’s marriage:

“It appears to me that certain enemies of the Watchtower organization have occasionally been too eager to believe and to repeat every charge made against the Society’s first president ... Considering the two strong-willed personalities that were involved, and the eccentric bent of each, I have little doubt that there was enough blame to go around, with both parties sharing responsibility for the marriage’s failure.

“To say that it was a peculiar marriage would be an understatement. After twenty-seven years—the first

eighteen of which they spent living together—both parties testified freely that there was no sexual relationship whatsoever between them ... A major issue in the divorce proceedings was Maria's contention that Charles was depriving her of the pleasure of sex, countered by Charles's insistence that Maria had always shared his preference for celibacy ...

"Considering the intensity of the battle between Charles and Maria, it seems reasonable to assume that she would have actually charged him with adultery if there had been even the flimsiest grounds for doing so. Instead, her charges of impropriety went no farther than alleged flirtation, and the case rested more heavily on accusations of neglect and mistreatment—such as Charles opening and reading her mail.

"Did he really get away with adultery unobserved? Perhaps, but a more likely scenario was that the total absence of sex in the relationship where he had the greatest opportunity—his marriage—was reflected in the absence of sex in his friendship with other women. It would appear that he never went beyond holding hands or a peck on the cheek with members of the opposite sex."⁶⁴

COMMITTED TO HIGH IDEALS. This brings into the open a major irony in the charges of sexual misbehavior against the Pastor. As demonstrated in both his life and teachings, Pastor Russell was committed to the highest standards and principles of conduct enunciated in Scripture and had even voluntarily adopted a celibate life-style. He served as an example to the Flock, was noted for his kind manner of dealing with associates, and all his relationships were wholly beyond reproach. His teachings on uprightness and purity in thought and deed culminated in his writing "A Vow Unto the Lord," a devotional guide designed especially to help the brethren avoid temptation in their dealings with the opposite sex.

Yet against all of this, on the flimsiest of evidence that amounts to hardly more than slander and gossip, this servant of the Lord is blatantly accused of the worst kind of moral misconduct. But, we

would ask, is not such a portrayal wholly inconsistent with reason, considering the exemplary character of the man, his high ideals and his life of consecration to the Lord? Are not these allegations simply crude attempts to blemish a distinguished messenger of God and to detract from the refreshing and instructive insights that he provided into God's Plan of Salvation?

Here we believe it will be of value to consider directly some of the Pastor's helpful statements regarding the life of the New Creation, marriage of believers and the proper duties that devolve upon husbands and wives toward each other. These matters are discussed candidly in a chapter devoted to "Marital and Other Privileges and Obligations of the New Creation," in the Sixth Volume of the *Scripture Studies* series, where he wrote:

"The New Creature, the new will, acting in and through these mortal bodies, is declared figuratively to be risen with Christ, and living for, seeking, those things which are above.—Col. 3:1 ... Gradually he learns more and more of the deceptiveness of his own flesh and of its weaknesses, and gradually grows in grace and in the wisdom which comes from above, and obtains more and more of a mastery in keeping the body '**under**'—in subjection to the new mind. (1 Cor. 9:27)"⁶⁵

"The proprieties of conduct and relationship between the sexes must be maintained by the New Creation ... It would be appropriate for them to be even more careful than the worldly, the natural man, respecting the weakness of their flesh and respecting the propriety of certain metes and bounds of proper conduct, modesty, reserve, etc., as between the sexes. In proportion as the New Creature is seeking the spiritual life, and in proportion as it realizes that sexual appetites war against the interests of the New Creation, in that same proportion should they endeavor ... to make straight paths for their feet, and to erect as many barriers ... as possible between themselves and temptations ..."⁶⁶

Turning to the beautiful way in which marriage pictures the relationship of Christ and the church, the Pastor continued:

“The Apostle distinctly points out that the marriage relationship amongst mankind is intended under divine arrangement to be a figure or illustration of the relationship between Christ and the Church, his Bride—his body. The language is most explicit:—

“ ‘Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their wives as their own bodies ... This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.’—Eph. 5:22-33

“[Hence] marriage was intended as a type ... The New Creation should esteem the typical, earthly marriage and its proper duties and responsibilities much more highly because of their appreciation of the antitypical union between Christ and his Church. Thus considered, every Christian man finds the grandest possible exemplification of his duties and responsibilities to his wife in the Lord’s care for the Church and her every interest, temporal, spiritual, present, and future, to the extent of his sacrifice of life on her behalf. Likewise the wife, as she appreciates the duties and responsibilities of the Church to the Lord, discerns a higher ideal of a wife’s duty and relationship toward her husband as his help-mate ...

“While urging all who contract the marriage relationship to realize as fully as possible the divine ideal, we,

nevertheless, note that none can grasp and appreciate and apply all of the principles and ideals connected with this type except those who have been begotten of the Spirit—the New Creation—because these only have the mind of Christ.”⁶⁷

The Pastor then concluded his discussion with a final exhortation to the Lord’s people:

“How important it is that the New Creation should have clearly in mind the instructions of the Lord’s Word on this subject; that they should have the very spirit of the Truth; and that they keep continually in mind the fact that they are New Creatures—not living as the world, simply to enjoy the present life, simply to rear families according to the flesh, but that their highest aim, object, endeavor, should be to walk after the Spirit, and to follow the directions of the Lord in all matters temporal as well as spiritual. They should always have in view the fact that they are consecrated to the Lord, dead with Christ as respects this world; and that their chief aim and object henceforth should be to use the present life and earthly vessels as sacrifices in the wisest possible way in the interest of the New Creature and its general work of serving and glorifying the Lord and building up itself and others of like precious faith in spiritual graces!”⁶⁸

In considering these admonitions of the Pastor that touch upon the Christian’s course in this life and especially the relationship between the sexes, we cannot help but be impressed that the one who expressed these words must himself have endeavored to live by them. Surely a mind that overflows with such thoughts as these and the ideals of holiness presented in God’s Word cannot at the same time dwell on earthly, sensual things and take pleasure in immoral behavior. We are therefore convinced that the Pastor’s life of complete devotion to the Lord and consistent example of purity in thought and deed, dramatically repudiate the shameful allegations of misconduct that have been raised.

Finally, it is worthwhile to note again the historian Penton's evaluation of Pastor Russell that "his personal life was generally free from blemish ... [and] he ... was completely devoted to [his] stewardship."⁶⁹

A CALL FOR TRUTH. Therefore, having reviewed these matters, we trust that all who are fair-minded and just in their approach will weigh the facts, consider the judgments of the historians cited, and recognize the possible prejudices of the Pastor's detractors. This we believe will lead to one inescapable conclusion: It is time, once and forever, to lay these unfounded charges to rest!

Should we allow the life work and reputation of this man of God to be tarnished by the kinds of allegations that we have been examining? Truth in this regard has been beclouded far too long and should at last be permitted to emerge victoriously! Let the noble character of this faithful servant of the Lord—Pastor Russell—be recognized as complementing his distinguished ministry and befitting the glad tidings of Kingdom blessings he was privileged to proclaim. And with this realization, none need be dissuaded from seriously considering the refreshing teachings and clearer insights into God's wondrous Plan of Salvation which that ministry opened up, as detailed especially in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this work.

An Occultic Pyramidologist?

This is an accusation that is not infrequently heard: Pastor Russell, by incorporating the measurements and layout of the Great Pyramid in his teachings, was thereby guilty of occultic practices. Randall Watters asserts:

"Among the most obvious of Russell's occult connections was the use of the Great Pyramid in Egypt, which he used to predict the future. [He] ... used the measurements of the inner secret passages, and turned 'feet into years' literally, in order to calculate the return of Christ."⁷⁰

The above charge is so distorted and out of touch with the facts that it suggests perhaps Mr. Watters is simply not acquainted with the beliefs of the Pastor. It is extremely difficult to understand how anyone familiar with the teachings of Pastor Russell on the subjects

of the occult and the Great Pyramid could make such a statement. This will become evident as we now examine both of these issues in turn.

OPPOSED TO THE OCCULT. In the first place, the Pastor always condemned the use of sorcery, divination, witchcraft and anything to do with the occult. He regularly admonished the Lord's people to heed God's warnings in Scripture against such practices and never engaged in such himself. There are simply no "occult connections" in his teachings whatever, as such would be contrary to his own convictions and beliefs.

Clear examples of the Pastor's strong opposition to the occult are not hard to find. In "A Vow Unto the Lord," which he urged his followers to adopt, a prominent section reads:

"I vow to Thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the Adversary."⁷¹

Then later in his ministry, the Pastor wrote specifically about the occult and again identified all such powers as emanating from the Adversary, and as evils that needed to be fought against:

"Throughout this Gospel age, the ... evil spirits, the ... fallen angels, have used, and do still use more or less of occult power—psychic powers, mediumistic powers, mesmeric powers, hypnotic powers—to mislead, to attract away from the truth, to make error appear to be truth ... We believe that God does not use such hypnotic powers, but as St. Paul declares, he has 'spoken to us through his Son,' and has given us his Scriptures, 'that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work'—not needing any occult powers. Hence we know of no good occult powers, but are to rate them all as deceptions of the adversary, against which God's people are fighting."⁷²

THE STONE WITNESS. In view of this strong stand that Pastor Russell took against the occult, what are we to make of his teachings on the Great Pyramid? We believe these are clearly expressed in his

writings and could hardly be misunderstood by anyone willing to take the time to read and evaluate them. The Pastor became convinced, through his careful study of the findings of other eminent investigators of the Pyramid, that it was indeed, as they had suggested, a storehouse of both scientific and spiritual truths.⁷³

It is a surprising fact that it has taken the advanced scientific knowledge of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to discover that many basic astronomical and geometric constants relating to the earth and the solar system were shown to be present in the design of the Pyramid's construction. This means that for over four thousand years these advanced scientific truths have been "locked" into the dimensions and angles of the Pyramid, offering strong evidence for the belief that the Pyramid is beyond mere human origin and design. It would be difficult if not impossible to conceive of how such knowledge would have been available to the ancients and thus suggests to the reverent mind that, similar to the Tabernacle and Temple arrangements in ancient Israel, a God-given blueprint was employed.

Even more important to Pastor Russell was the discovery that the Great Pyramid was a storehouse of human history and Divine prophecy and fully corroborated God's Plan of Salvation as revealed in the Bible. Robert Menzies of Scotland, in the late nineteenth century, was apparently the first to recognize this Truth. Consequently in 1890, the Pastor devoted an entire chapter in the Third Volume of his *Scripture Studies* series to this topic, and acclaimed the value of the testimony of the Great Pyramid in the following terms:

"We now find [it] to be a most full and complete corroboration of the plan of the ages and the times and seasons therewith associated, as taught in the Scriptures . . . It is by no means an addition to the written revelation: that revelation is complete and perfect, and needs no addition. But it is a strong **corroborative witness** to God's plan; and few students can carefully examine it, marking the harmony of its testimony with that of the written Word, without feeling impressed that its construction was planned and directed by the same divine wisdom, and that it is the pillar of witness referred to by the prophet in [Isaiah 19:19,20]." ⁷⁴

It is also remarkable to those who have studied the matter, that the construction symbols of the Pyramid—chambers, passageways and their placement—coincide in detail with the overall features of the Chart of the Ages produced by the Pastor to illustrate God’s Plan. Further, the lengths of the various passageways, measured in Pyramid inches (a unit found to be an integral part of the Pyramid design), were found to be exactly equivalent in years to the lengths of various ages and dispensations in the Bible chronology from man’s creation onward. Thus, an exact corroboration of the Bible teachings of the Plan of Salvation and its time features was seen in the symbolic testimony of the Great Pyramid.

Now we need to pause to make several observations regarding Pastor Russell’s use of the Pyramid as outlined above:

(a) Nothing whatever that he taught from the Pyramid had anything to do with the occult. All of his references to the Pyramid were gleaned from straightforward scientific investigation and analysis, from which a comparison to Scripture was then drawn. There was nothing secret, magical or occultic in the way this was done.

(b) The Pyramid was not used as an inspired source of chronological, prophetic or other Truth. The Pastor himself stated categorically, “We have never attempted to place the Great Pyramid, sometimes called the Bible in Stone, on a parallel or equality with the Word of God as represented by the Old and New Testament Scriptures—the latter stand pre-eminent always as the authority.”⁷⁵ He consistently used the Pyramid only to substantiate beliefs which were already understood from a study of the Bible. And thus it was in a secondary role that he viewed the Pyramid as functioning as “a sign and a witness unto Jehovah,” as mentioned by Isaiah the prophet.

(c) Contrary to the opening assertion of Mr. Watters, the Great Pyramid definitely was not used to predict the date for the Second Coming of Christ or to foretell any other events. All of the dates that it set forth coincided directly with known events in the six thousand-year Bible chronology or dovetailed completely with it. Thus there were no surprises or additional revelations to be found in its measurements as applicable to prophetic events—just the realization

that it precisely corroborated the accuracy of the written revelation, the Bible.

PYRAMID USAGE. Finally, we need to comment on yet another absurd charge in connection with the Pyramid. This was made by David Reed, who attempts to build a case on the alleged usage of questionable forms of pyramidology in the Pastor's overall ministry. First, he cites the fact that a seven-foot-tall stone pyramid was used in the Society's Rosemont Cemetery near Pittsburgh to mark the location of burial plots for members of the Bethel staff, including Pastor Russell, and then writes:

"Why a pyramid? Because much of the Society's teaching focused on 'The Testimony of God's Stone Witness and Prophet, the Great Pyramid in Egypt,' title of Chapter Ten, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. III, 1890, p. 313." ⁷⁶ [Then at a later date Reed stressed that this same chapter had sixty-three pages of material, in which the Pastor used "Egyptian pyramidology to foretell future events."⁷⁷]

The first allegation seems like the old adage of "making a mountain out of a molehill." If one were convinced that God had used the Pyramid in a remarkable way to symbolize His plan of the ages and had specifically identified it as such in His Word (the pillar of witness referred to in Isaiah 19:19,20), would it be improper or occultic to have a reminder of such erected as an identifying marker of a section of a graveyard? It should also be pointed out that on each face of this marker pyramid there was a large replica of an open Bible, with the obvious intent of depicting how the Pyramid reflected and confirmed its teachings.

In similar style, a stone pyramid with a cross and crown sculptured on its front face may be seen in the Preston Road Cemetery in Yeovil, England. It evidently marks the grave of a Bible Student and his wife, and clearly states its significance on the face to the left of its frontage: "This model of the Great Pyramid of Egypt in symbol illustrates the glorious purpose of God to shortly through Christ restore edenic blessings."⁷⁸ Thus it emphasizes that the Pyramid is viewed as God's witness in stone reflecting the grand message of the Bible and has nothing whatsoever to do with the occult.

As for Reed's second assertion alleging widespread use of Pyramid teachings in the Pastor's ministry, again it is entirely misleading. The sixty-four pages (inclusive) devoted to the Great Pyramid in Volume Three are but a small portion—2.1 per cent—of the 2,968 pages contained in all of the six volumes of *Scripture Studies*. A similar analysis of the subject matter in the *Watch Tower Reprints* from the years 1879 to 1916 shows that less than 0.3 per cent of its pages are devoted to the Pyramid. Overall, then, only about 1.1 per cent of the Pastor's writings (as reflected in these works) were concerned with the Pyramid. Surely this can hardly be construed as "much" or substantial.

Guilty of Racism?⁷⁹

Another recent accusation which has been raised is that of racism. Randall Watters, founder of Bethel Ministries, charges that the Watch Tower organization under the leadership of Pastor Russell was guilty of "preferential treatment of the Caucasian" and actually carried statements in its journal expressing the "inferiority of the black man." He alleges that these articles belittled blacks by over-emphasizing their basic humble nature and characterizing them as being of lower intelligence with lesser interest in the deeper, intellectual aspects of the Bible's message.⁸⁰

Of all the charges against Pastor Charles T. Russell, racism is one of the most outrageous and unjust. At the onset, it is of interest to note that during the Pastor's lifetime, when he was constantly being attacked and vilified, racism was NOT among the accusations. The charges about racism have come to the forefront since his death when the beautiful Truths and doctrines that he taught were compromised and wild efforts were made to discredit his ministry on any possible grounds.

"Racism" and the title of "racist," as Webster defines it, is: "the belief in the inborn superiority of one race, especially a person's own race, over another race of humanity, and behavior consistent with that belief."

To be classified as a racist would be especially disheartening to a man of Pastor Russell's persuasion, who all of his life preached liberty to the captives. His theme throughout his ministry was that of

the Scriptures—the Ransom Sacrifice of Christ, to be followed by the Restitution of all things lost in Adam. (Acts 3:19-21) This was applicable to ALL, not for white people only; it called for Salvation, liberty and justice for the entire human race in bondage to sin and death. And for those who accept Christ now, regardless of their race, color or ethnic origin, the Pastor was fond of quoting Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Pastor Russell was born in 1852 and raised during a time when the United States was engaged in a bitter debate over the issue of slavery which would eventually divide the country. Slavery, though more prevalent in the southern states, was practiced to some extent throughout the nation, and the life of the black man was difficult. He was denied an education, with some states passing laws against even teaching him to read. He had very few rights, he was not allowed to live in certain areas, and there were laws passed by various states that black people could not carry weapons, congregate in large crowds, marry white people, testify in courts against whites, or make a contract. In some cases, they were even denied religious services and baptism.

Slavery had thus become an accepted way of life and the black man was generally believed to be an inferior creature. Many claimed that the black man was incapable of ever being educated or civilized as the white man. Ignorance kept him in servitude and, even when freed from slavery in 1864, many stayed in voluntary servitude because—having known only slavery—they feared that they were unable to take care of themselves. The issue of slavery was a major American problem from the debates of the constitutional convention in 1787 to the civil war which began in 1861. Since then, the role of the black man in America has continued to be one of the chief issues of our democracy.

Pastor Russell started his ministry about the year 1875, during a period in American history known as “Reconstruction.” He was not a political activist, he was not a civil rights leader—he was a pastor, a preacher, a teacher and an expounder of the Word of God. Along with other churchmen of his era, he obeyed the laws of the

land concerning segregation; but this did not mean that he approved of the practice, as some critics charge.

One incident that these detractors cite occurred when he presented the Photo-Drama program to a segregated audience, with blacks being asked to sit in the balcony of the theater. The Pastor addressed this issue in a 1914 column of his journal, where he explained that it had become evident that as the attendance of the colored people increased, proportionately the number of whites would decrease. To avoid the possibility of such intermingling of the races from jeopardizing the success of the Drama, he reluctantly consented to segregation as the alternative. He wrote:

“It is a question of putting either the interests of God’s cause first, or else the interests of the race first. We believed it our duty to put God first and the truth first—at any cost to others or to ourself! ... All the colored brethren should know our attitude toward them—they should know that we love to serve them in any way possible and to give them the very best we have to give of the Gospel message; and that it is only a question of whether our giving to them in one way would entirely deprive us of giving the truth to others.”⁸¹

During the Pastor’s lifetime and years of active ministry, the Gospel was spread by him and his associates to many parts of the world, Africa included. There was much witnessing work being done, with many accepting the Pastor’s message in the West Indies, Jamaica and Barbados. One account of the work in Africa is recorded for us in the February 1907 issue of the *Watch Tower*, where the Pastor stated, “We will be glad to cooperate according to our judgment of the Lord’s will with any, either whites or blacks, who desire to engage in this section of the harvest field.”⁸² In the same article the Pastor also wrote:

“In various parts of our country Berean Bible Study classes have already been started amongst the colored friends. Indeed, of a number of these dear brethren we could surely say that, in rightly dividing the Word and clearly presenting it to others, very few amongst the whites will be found their superiors. We could also say

of them that, so far as their knowledge goes, their standard of integrity and morality seems to be equally high with them as with the white brethren.”⁸³

It is not surprising to read or to hear unkind and untrue things written or spoken about Pastor Russell. The critics use his own words to attack him—words that are often taken out of context, with the original meaning distorted to fit their charges. Such is the allegation that the Pastor was a racist.

Here was a man of God who wrote well over two million words in books, tracts, booklets and newspaper sermons. But it would not be hard for someone to find some inconsistencies in what was written over a span of more than forty years. The Pastor was not perfect, he was not inspired (in the same sense as the writers of the Bible), and he was not a self-proclaimed prophet. He made some mistakes, as all humans do; but one thing that he was not, and never claimed to be, was a racist. He was an excellent writer and, if he believed in and supported racism, it would have been more than obvious and reflected in all of his writings, not just a selected few taken mainly out of context.

However, a dead man cannot fight back, and the critics have seized upon that fact to discredit him. Our purpose here is not to debate these antagonists of the Pastor, for we firmly believe that nothing we say could deter them or change their minds. We will simply cite a few of the things he wrote and perhaps some who are undecided will come to a clearer understanding of what the Pastor’s life was all about. We also urge those who desire Eternal Truth to read the Pastor’s landmark series, *Studies in the Scriptures*, and to judge these Volumes on their own merit as the Pastor encouraged all to do, in accordance with 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

The following are a few of the many accounts from the *Watch Tower* where the Pastor wrote about equality and his love for all, irrespective of race, creed, color or national origin. In the June 1888 issue of his journal, he wrote:

“It may be claimed by some that the peasantry were more happy years ago when they were without educational advantages, ignorant, etc., and virtually bought

and sold with the land. This may be true in many instances, and so too, no doubt, many of the Negroes once slaves in the United States were happier and better provided for in slavery, than now that they are their own masters. But the principle involved is that the FREEDOM is needful to the development of the human mind and of self-control and progress in general toward the true ends of human existence.

“We were reasoning of **righteousness**, not of temporary expediency as viewed by narrow minds from a selfish standpoint. We reasoned too, of ‘judgment to come,’ and that speedily now, for we are in the beginning of the great Day of Judgment—the Millennial age, in which judgment shall be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17): in which, too, the unjust shall receive a **just** recompense therefor.

“Though it may be claimed for the masses, that ‘ignorance **was** bliss,’ it can be claimed no longer. Soon this and SIMILAR WRONGS will bring the great time of trouble foretold in Scripture. Let all the **saints** scrutinize closely, every act of dealing and relationship with each other and with the world; let us make certain that justice prevails in every instance—that we do to others not differently from what we would wish them to do to us if our places were changed—making sure to err, if at all, on the side of benevolence. And if we are among those suffering injustice, we, above all others, must be patient and forbearing, not seeking to recompense evil for evil, but call to mind the words of the Apostle—Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved, but rather let your wrath give place to sympathy and pity, remembering that it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine; I **will repay**, saith the Lord.’ ”⁸⁴ (Rom. 12:19, Deut. 32:35)

In the *Watch Tower* of July 15, 1902, Pastor Russell answered a question about the black man being a beast. We quote:

“A brother sends us, with the following questions, a book now having an extensive sale in the South, and calculated to stir up strife with its teaching that the

Negro is not human, but a beast. Our answers review the statements of said book.

“(1) **Question**—Are there any grounds for the belief of some that the Negro is one of the lower animals, in the Scriptures called a ‘beast’ and created, like the other beasts, prior to the creation of Adam, who was the first that was called a man?

“**Answer**—Of course whoever advances such a theory must at least fancy that he has proofs to support it, and frequently the wish to find such proofs misleads the judgment and causes the individual to accept as proofs, matters which would not be proofs if regarded in an unprejudiced manner. In our opinion there are no such proofs, but strong testimony of the Scriptures to the contrary.

“Science has proven that somehow the Creator has fixed boundaries and limitations which hinder the different species from intermingling. Even where the species closely resemble each other in many respects, as for instance, the horse and donkey, the dog and the cat, a cross-breed with powers of propagation cannot be secured. This law, which it is well known obtains throughout the animal kingdom, should in all reason be applicable to mankind; and hence, if whites and Negroes were of different species they could not, by commingling, produce offspring capable of propagation.

“Briefly stated, this is the scientific side of the question, which cannot be set aside by any amount of sophistry or theorizing. It will stand as a fact after the theorizing is dead. From the Scriptural standpoint the answer is equally specific. Note the Apostle’s words, ‘God that made the world and all things therein ... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.’—Acts 17:24-28.”⁸⁵

Later in the same article, the Pastor elaborated further on other Biblical passages bearing on the question. He wrote:

“The Scriptural evidences are wholly against the theory mentioned in the question. Take, for instance, the fact that Moses married a negress [Zipporah], and had children by her. According to the theory we are criticising this would have been an unpardonable sin in God’s sight, a carnal union between a man and a beast. According to this theory Moses would have been rejected utterly from divine favor. But what do we find? Quite to the contrary. It was after this marriage that God chose Moses to be his representative and the leader of his people out of Egyptian bondage.

“Moreover, it was when Moses’ brother Aaron and his sister Miriam, especially the latter, upbraided him for his marriage to a negress, that the Lord defended him in the matter, and smote Miriam with the plague of leprosy as a punishment for her improper conduct and language respecting this subject. (See the account, Num. 12) Zipporah was an Ethiopian, described in the Hebrew text as a Cushite.

“Ebed-melech, also an Ethiopian, was one of King Zedekiah’s household, and be it noted that he was both thoughtful and zealous for the Lord’s prophet, Jeremiah, and was the commander of the thirty men who delivered him from prison. (Jer. 38:7-12) Hence the argument of those who claim that the Negro is devoid of organizing intelligence or ability, except as he may have an admixture of white blood, is shown to be fallacious.”⁸⁶

Other examples of outstanding personages mentioned in Scripture who were Negro were also cited: the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon in the height of his glory, and the Ethiopian eunuch to whom Philip was specially sent by God to bring the message of Salvation.⁸⁷ All are wonderful examples to show that the Negro was indeed not only created by God as a member of the human race, but in many instances specially favored and honored by Him.

Finally, it is fitting to remember the Pastor’s all-inclusive statement:

“We have not the slightest of race prejudice, and ... we love the colored brethren with just the same warmth of heart that we love the white.”⁸⁸

We accept these words as genuine and sincere; and we who love, admire and respect the Pastor and his teachings will leave the final judgment of him (and his critics) to the Almighty God, who can read the heart, motives and intentions of all concerned.

Affiliated with the “Illuminati”?

A final accusation to be touched upon is based on the idea that the entire world is being secretly run by a cabal of illustrious and wealthy Jews known as the “Illuminati” and founders of a “New World Order,” with which Pastor Russell was allegedly connected. Since the 1990s, authors David Icke, Fritz Springmeier and others have offered such conspiracy theories, which become quite complicated and involved. These writers seem especially obsessed with the Pastor’s role in this, and claim to trace his descent from a German-Jewish family by the name of Roessel, who had close ties with the Rothschilds and supposedly were guilty of all sorts of occultic practices. The family is thought to have fled from Germany to Scotland as a mecca for disaffected occultic Jews. That country, according to this theory, became the fertile ground for founding the “Illuminati,” which then used its wealth and “secret” knowledge in a conspiracy for controlling the world.⁸⁹

As fanciful as all this may sound, the Icke and Springmeier books and Internet materials are cleverly marketed and eagerly sought after. What some would dismiss as mere “junk history” put out by opportunistic conspiracy theorists is nonetheless quite popular in other circles and generates a high level of interest. Thousands have been captivated by it and the Pastor’s reputation further demeaned thereby. Seemingly anyone with a fertile mind and over-active imagination can conjure up whatever he wishes about a prominent figure and some people will believe it! It is therefore incumbent upon us, when we are subjected to this kind of sensationalism, to use our good judgment in evaluating its credibility or lack thereof based on documented historical facts.

Messrs. Icke and Springmeier may weave an interesting tale of supposed “secret dealings”; but where is the solid evidence to substantiate their claims? Historically sound scholarship does not build a case based on vague “resemblances” and alleged “family trees” such as are used to implicate Pastor Russell. The missing and non-existent supporting facts are so glaring here that they speak volumes to the honest inquirer for truth.

In addition, these theorists make charges concerning the Pastor’s alleged connections to Free Masonry, pyramidology and the occult. Some of these and similar assertions have already been considered earlier in this chapter. We trust that they have all been laid to rest and need not be treated again.

Yet another charge is the surprising claim that it was the Rothschilds who were instrumental in helping to fund the early Watch Tower Society! This is directly at variance with the facts we have already set forth in Chapter 1 of this presentation. Our readers may recall that Pastor Russell was an exceedingly successful businessman at a young age and began to use the wealth gained thereby in supporting his religious activities. He also inherited some money from his uncle, which he used for capital investment purposes. When the Pastor became convinced from his study of the Bible that the End Times of prophecy had commenced and a reaping work was due among God’s people, he sold out all of his business interests for what was considered to be a small fortune at the time.⁹⁰ Thenceforth, his material resources as well as his time and talents were devoted totally to spreading the Truth of God’s soon-coming Kingdom. Thus it seems clear that neither the Rothschilds nor any other financiers were needed for the start-up of the Watch Tower Society.

One remaining point we might mention is a distorted thread of truth that again supposedly links Pastor Russell with the Rothschilds. It concerns that family’s helping to finance the early colonization efforts in Palestine. Whereas it is true that the Pastor encouraged them to help their fellow Jews, there was nothing secret or improper in this request. He actively encouraged all the Jews who were interested in the cause of Zionism to rally behind the resettlement efforts, in accord with Bible promises and prophecy that spoke of the near reestablishment of Israel in the Holy Land. The Pastor’s role in this was perfectly honorable and a part of the true historical

record.⁹¹ It should not be twisted out of context into a fanciful scenario of conspiracy and intrigue.

Here we will leave this brief consideration of the “Illuminati” and related charges. Once again the final responsibility falls upon the reader to evaluate. Do these assertions contain valid truth and shed a flood of light on the ministry of Pastor Russell, or are they but far-fetched tales that border on the fantastic? We believe the answer should not be difficult to determine.

Endnotes: Chapter 8

1. Private communication, 6/1/1997, from researcher Jonathan A. Ross (used by permission). Ross publishes *The Arian*, a periodical specializing in early Adventist and Bible Student history, and providing general information concerning groups with non-Trinitarian views. It is a compilation of a wide variety of materials—historical as well as current, both supportive and adverse—without editorial comment.
2. Walter R. Martin and Norman H. Klann, *Jehovah of the Watchtower* (hereafter cited as Martin and Klann), p. 113.
Note: Although this statement is specifically aimed at the Jehovah’s Witnesses, its all-inclusiveness would necessarily take in the Bible Students as well.
3. *Bible Students Newsletter*, “The Best and Most Widely Known Minister in the World,” Winter 1986-87, p. 11, quoting from *Christian Globe*, London, May 5, 1910. See also *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), Special Issue of Jan. 1, 1912, showing facsimiles of news clippings of Pastor Russell’s Round-the-World Tour, p. 4950.
4. C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The New Creation*, p. 314.
5. Walter Martin, *The Rise of the Cults*, p. 12.
6. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, “HERESY,” p. 378.
7. Fritz Springmeier, *The Watchtower and the Masons*; also his Internet web site, http://www.geocities.com/lord_visionary/the_russell_bloodline.htm, “The Russell Bloodline” (hereafter cited as Springmeier, “Russell Bloodline”).
8. Springmeier, “Russell Bloodline.”
9. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, “Freemasons,” Vol. IV., p. 257; Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, “An Introduction to Freemasonry,” by Emmett McLoughlin, p. xxxvi.

10. *The Encyclopedia Americana*, “Masons,” Vol. 18, p. 432.
11. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert C. Broderick, ed., “Freemasonry,” p. 229.
12. Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, “Taxil, Leo,” Vol. II., pp. 1013-1016, and “Anti-Masonic Books,” Vol. I., p. 83.
13. Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons* (hereafter cited as Ridley), p. 277; Eric Patterson, Internet web site, www.pastor-russell.com, “Was Pastor Russell a Freemason?” (hereafter cited as Patterson, “Pastor a Freemason?”).
14. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 580-581.
15. *Reprints*, “Secret and Beneficial Societies,” June 15, 1895, p. 1827.
16. *Reprints*, “Consecration Vs. the World and Its Affairs,” Aug. 1, 1895, p. 1848.
17. *Pastor Russell’s Convention Discourses*, “The Temple of God,” 1913 (hereafter cited as Russell, “The Temple”), p. 359.
18. Russell, “The Temple,” p. 362.
19. Russell, “The Temple,” p. 362.
20. *The World Book Encyclopedia*, “Masonry,” Vol. 13, p. 266.
21. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, “Freemasons,” Vol. IV., p. 258.
22. Ridley, p. 276.
23. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Freemasonry,” Vol. 4, p. 966.
24. Randall Watters, ed., *Bethel Ministries Newsletter* (hereafter cited as Watters), “The Occultic Origins of the Watchtower,” Jan./Feb. 1992, p. 9.
Note: The name of this publication was later changed to *Free Minds Journal*.
25. Friedrich Rest, *Our Christian Symbols*, p. 24.
26. *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, p. 200; and *Reprints*, Facsimile of *Watch Tower* cover for January 1891.
27. Communication with Brian Kutscher, Bible Students’ Archives, 1/24/2003; and *Reprints*, Facsimile of *Watch Tower* cover for Jan. 1, 1895.
28. *The Service Hymnal*, Hymn No. 259, “Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?”. (The hymn writer, Rev. Thomas Shepherd, died in 1739; see p. 467 of the section, “Index of Authors and Composers.”)
29. Patterson, “Pastor a Freemason?”
30. Martin and Klann, p. 27.
Note: *Jehovah of the Watchtower* was one of the earliest major

works written against the Jehovah's Witnesses. Its authors were both Fundamentalist Baptist ministers concerned with the inroads that this group was making against orthodox Christianity. It includes a scathing, grossly unfair attack against Pastor Russell—his integrity, qualifications for the ministry, and personal morality. Though claiming to be a thoroughly researched and scholarly study, it merely passes along the distortions and one-sided views of the Pastor's chief enemies, and makes no serious effort to uncover the truth of the various charges made. It also attempts to provide a defense of the cardinal doctrines of orthodoxy, including the Trinity, Immortality of the soul and eternal torment in Hell.

Also of interest is a brief mention of the Dawn Bible Students, which in contrast with the Jehovah's Witnesses, are characterized as remaining "wholly true to Russell's teaching," harboring "no hatred for peoples of other religions," and proclaiming by radio and the printed page that the hope for the unsaved of mankind is a "second chance" in the general Resurrection of the dead in the Millennial Kingdom. The "Dawnites" were seen as being "deeply sincere in their beliefs but ... sincerely wrong." (pp. 99-100)

On the whole, this book is an unfortunate example of what can be produced by those who have a zeal for defending their faith, yet lack the true understanding of God's Word.

31. M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (hereafter cited as Penton), pp. 43-44.
32. Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, compiled by Bill Wilson, p. 340.
33. Leroy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. IV, pp. 301, 188, 225, 249, and 339.
34. *Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick* newsletter, "Beware of False Prophets," about 1997 (hereafter cited as "False Prophets").
35. "False Prophets."
36. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, Author's Foreword, p. i.
37. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, Author's Foreword, pp. viii., x.-xi.
38. Martin and Klann, p. 22.
39. *Reprints*, "Is the Reading of 'Scripture Studies' Bible Study?," Sept. 15, 1910 (hereafter cited as "Bible Study"), p. 4685.
40. *Reprints*, "Bible Study," p. 4685.
41. Timothy White, *A People For His Name* (hereafter cited as White), p. 135.

42. White, p. 135.
43. White, p. 136.
44. Penton, p. 32; see also *Reprints*, “Independent Bible Study,” Sept. 15, 1911, p. 4885.
45. *Reprints*, “Bible Study,” pp. 4684-4685.
46. *Reprints*, “Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness,” Dec. 15, 1896 (hereafter cited as “Worship the Lord”), p. 2080.
47. *The Watch Tower*, “Is the Reading of ‘Scripture Studies’ Bible Study?,” Sept. 15, 1910, p. 299.
Note: Due to a typographical error in the reprinting of this article, the last word of the quotation, “option,” was incorrectly shown as “opinion” in *Reprints* p. 4686.
48. Penton, p. 26.
49. *Reprints*, “Worship the Lord,” p. 2080.
50. *Reprints*, “Harvest Gatherings and Siftings,” July 15, 1906, p. 3821.
51. *Reprints*, “Unto the Uttermost Parts of the Earth,” June 15, 1899, p. 2489.
52. White, p. 35.
53. Barbara G. Harrison, *An Accidental Autobiography* (hereafter cited as Harrison, *Autobiography*), pp. 77-81.
54. Harrison, *Autobiography*, p. 81.
55. Barbara G. Harrison (1934-2002), the author cited here, died at age sixty-seven, and was hailed as “a multifaceted writer . . . noted for her humor and her strong opinions.” She wrote of coming from “an extremely disorganized family,” whose father “sexually abused her and once tried to kill her.” She was married in 1960, had two children, and was divorced eight years later. In her writing, she portrays the Jehovah’s Witnesses religion, to which she was converted at age nine, as being “racist, sexist and totalitarian,” but also recalls individual members’ kindnesses and courage. Her decision to leave the group at age twenty-two was a turning point in her life and career. In her forties, she returned to the religion of her early childhood, Roman Catholicism. (*New York Times*, April 26, 2002, obituary by Douglas Martin)
56. *Reprints*, “Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction” and “All the Way My Savior Leads Me” (two related articles), July 15, 1906, pp. 3808, 3815.

57. Comments by a close observer of the life and ministry of Pastor Russell who preferred not to have his name listed.
58. Comments by a licensed practicing physician who wishes to remain anonymous.
59. Harrison, *Autobiography*, p. 72.
60. Harrison, *Autobiography*, p. 77.
61. Harrison, *Autobiography*, p. 78.
62. *Reprints*, “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society’s Report,” Dec. 15, 1908, p. 4294, and “The Opening at Brooklyn,” Mar. 1, 1909, p. 4342.
Note: Even Martin and Klann, strident detractors of the Pastor, correctly identify the year of the move to Brooklyn: “In the year 1908 the headquarters of the movement were transferred to Brooklyn, New York, where property was purchased (17 Hicks Street) and became known as ‘The Brooklyn Tabernacle.’ ” (*Jehovah of the Watchtower*, p. 12)
63. Penton, pp. 401-402 (commenting on Barbara Harrison’s, *Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah’s Witnesses*—New York: Simon and Shuster, 1978).
64. David A. Reed, *Blood on the Altar*, pp. 43-45.
65. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 487, 489.
66. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 490.
67. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 494-495.
68. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 517.
69. Penton, pp. 43-44.
70. Watters, “The Occultic Origins of the Watchtower,” Jan./Feb. 1992, p. 8.
71. Russell, “A Vow Unto the Lord,” Paragraph 4.
Note: This “Vow” is reproduced in Appendix B, Section 2.
72. *Reprints*, “Preferred Monarchy to Republic,” under heading, “Evil Occult Powers in Operation,” Feb. 15, 1915, p. 5637.
73. Outstanding names in the investigation of the Great Pyramid are John Greaves, 1637; Howard Vyse, 1837; John Taylor, 1859; C. Piazzi Smyth, 1865; and W. M. Flinders Petrie, 1881.
74. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, pp. 320, 315.
75. Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come*, Author’s Foreword, p. iii.

76. David Reed (hereafter cited as Reed), under the heading, "Pyramidology," *Comments From the Friends* (hereafter cited as *Comments*), Summer 1991, p. 5.
77. Reed, "Proclaimers" *Answered Page by Page*, excerpted in *Comments*, Spring 1994, p. 10.
78. Robert Stewart, "Pyramid in England" (letter to the editor), *Comments*, Summer 1992, p. 10.
79. This section, somewhat edited, was written by James Watkins, former editor of the *Bible Students Newsletter*.
80. Watters, "Blacks and the Watchtower," July/Aug. 1988, pp. 1-2.
81. *Reprints*, "The Photo-Drama of Creation," April 1, 1914, p. 5434.
82. *Reprints*, "Harvest Work Amongst the Blacks" (hereafter cited as "Amongst the Blacks"), Feb. 15, 1907, p. 3943.
83. *Reprints*, "Amongst the Blacks," Feb. 15, 1907, p. 3943.
84. *Reprints*, "View From the Tower," June 1888, p. 1037.
85. *Reprints*, "The Negro Not a Beast" (hereafter cited as "Not a Beast"), July 15, 1902, p. 3042.
86. *Reprints*, "Not a Beast," July 15, 1902, p. 3042.
87. *Reprints*, "Not a Beast," July 15, 1902, p. 3043.
88. *Reprints*, "The Volunteer Work," April 15, 1900, p. 2618.
89. See for example Springmeier, "Russell Bloodline"; and the David Icke web site, <http://davidicke.com/icke/articles/russell.html>, "The Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses Are the Same Organisation."
90. According to historian Penton, "Russell was an extremely able entrepreneur who used his early, rather modest wealth to accumulate a significant fortune." Penton also mentions Pastor Russell's inheritance from his uncle, based on the findings of Richard Rawe who had investigated the Pastor's business activities closely. See Penton, p. 14, and pp. 338-339, Note 2.
91. While on a visit to Jerusalem in 1891, Pastor Russell wrote identical letters, dated August 18 of that year, to Barons Rothschild and Hirsch, perhaps the two most prominent world Jewish leaders of their day. He urged them to purchase from Turkey all the government-owned land in Palestine to open it for colonization by Jews eager to return to the Holy Land, and proposed a plan for establishing a multi-nation mandate that would create a free state there. See *Reprints*, "A New Government for Palestine Proposed," Dec. 1891, pp. 1342-1343.

PART FOUR:

COMPLETING HIS EARTHLY LABORS

“Be thou faithful unto death,
And I will give thee a crown of life.”
—Revelation 2:10

“And I heard a voice from heaven
Saying unto me, Write,
Blessed are the dead
Which die in the Lord from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit,
That they may rest from their labors;
And their works do follow them.”
—Revelation 14:13



The Pastor on a Transcontinental Tour, Kansas City, Missouri Stop (1911)
Often traveling by railroad in his widespread ministry, he died in 1916 while returning from a Western speaking tour; turmoil and confusion in the Movement followed.

9

When Pastor Russell Died

AS THE year 1916 moved beyond the midpoint, the Pastor sensed that he was nearing the end of his earthly career. Over a forty-five-year period, he had lost but one day due to sickness, but in July of that year he fell seriously ill. After partially recovering, he confided to a trusted aide at the Brooklyn Bethel that he would not be around much longer. He also realized that much work remained to be done in preaching the “Gospel of the Kingdom.”

Final Days and Labors of Love

In his final days, he began systematically reviewing the Six Volumes of his exhaustive work, *Studies in the Scriptures*, and on the first day of the month in which he died he wrote an updated Foreword to each one. Many have seen in this the Lord’s overruling hand, to give to the “household of faith” the benefit of the Pastor’s latest thoughts and comments. Earlier he had made some changes at the headquarters in Brooklyn, placing much more responsibility on the department heads and leaving detailed descriptions of duties that the supervisors were to perform in order to ensure that all would run smoothly.

Then on October 16, despite his deteriorating health, the Pastor insisted on leaving for an extended preplanned lecture tour that would take him to the far West and Southwest of the country. As the

train trip proceeded and various speaking engagements were met, it soon became obvious to his traveling secretary that the Pastor was again becoming seriously ill and losing strength. But there was no thought of turning back, as he was determined to carry on as best he could.

On October 23, one week into the trip, he was still able to muster sufficient strength—or sheer will power—to give two public talks and a discourse to the brethren, totaling six hours on the platform for that day alone. These meetings were held in Texas, at Galveston and Houston. However by the next day, in his final public appearance in San Antonio, the pain and distress of his condition necessitated his leaving the platform three times while a substitute speaker picked up the thread of his thoughts. Two days later he became bedridden on the train as it continued to its destination in Los Angeles.¹

Upon arrival in Los Angeles on October 29, it was evident to all that the Pastor had become extremely weak physically and his features were very drawn. His companions were impressed that this but added to his mature and saintly appearance. It almost defies reason that, despite not being able to consume any solid food other than a little fruit for several days, he was willing to expend the last vestige of his depleted strength to serve the local ecclesia with the final discourse of the tour. It was to be his last Bible lecture and labor of love on behalf of the brethren.

In subdued speech and, for the first time in his distinguished career, in a sitting position, “in deep distress, in great suffering, and in a most solemn manner, he spoke for forty-five minutes; then answered questions for a short time.” Finally, he pronounced upon the assembly the Lord’s benediction, as recorded in Numbers 6:24-26. In closing, he requested that all join in singing the hymn, “Abide, Sweet Spirit,” himself quoting the first verse:

“Abide sweet Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be thou our guardian, thou our guide;
O’er every thought and step preside.”²

In the words of his traveling assistant:

“So closed the last, and in some respects the most momentous meeting ever conducted by ‘that faithful and wise servant’ ... In less than forty-eight hours he was destined to be with our Lord in glory. When the meeting closed, there were not many dry eyes amongst that vast concourse of the Lord’s people.”³

On Tuesday afternoon, October 31, 1916, while homeward bound on a Santa Fe train speeding eastward through the state of Texas, Pastor Russell breathed his last and was taken to his reward. It was said of him that in all his years of ministry he never took a vacation and devoted all of his waking hours to the work of the Harvest time. Truly he had laid down his life in wholehearted consecrated service—to the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. He had heard the voice of the Lord, he had responded with all in his power, and he had done as he was commanded to do. (Ezek. 9:11)

Turmoil and Sadness

When word flashed across the wires that Pastor Russell was dead, the brethren were stunned. Few had been aware of the Pastor’s deteriorating condition and thus were overwhelmed by the news. At the Bethel Home in Brooklyn, there was complete consternation and grief. A first-hand witness later wrote:

“Some wept audibly ... All were greatly upset ... Little work was done that day. We did not know what to do. It was so unexpected ... Throughout his life [Brother] Russell had been ‘the Society.’ The work centered around his dynamic determination to see God’s will done.”⁴

Elsewhere, as news of the death spread rapidly, Bible Students the world over could think or speak of little else. The leader of their movement, which for forty years had spread the glorious message of the Gospel of the Kingdom, was now dead! He had inspired a band of zealous workers who had consecrated their lives to serve God and together they had accomplished a work of staggering proportions. But the Kingdom which they sought and of which the prophets of the Bible had spoken so sublimely had not yet been established; and

now the leader whom they held in such love and esteem had suddenly been taken from them. As one follower expressed it:

“Somehow many of us felt that Brother Russell would remain with the church in the flesh as long as there was work to do this side the veil, and it was difficult to grasp the hard fact that now he was gone.”⁵

This was the somber mood that prevailed as preparations were made for the funeral. On Saturday and Sunday, November 4 and 5, Bible Students kept arriving by train in great numbers to view his remains and attend the services planned at the New York City Temple. To accommodate the large group that gathered, three separate services had to be arranged for Sunday, which consisted of appropriate remarks by seventeen different coworkers of the Pastor. It was said of the occasion that “every inch of available space was occupied, from the basement to and including the second balcony.”⁶ The orations were all repeated for the benefit of the overflow audience in a smaller lecture hall below the main auditorium.

The fourth part of the funeral service was held on the afternoon of the next day in the packed, large auditorium of the Carnegie Library in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, close to where the Pastor’s ministry had begun. The funeral cortege consisted of 101 automobiles and a train of several trolley cars leading to the Bethel Home funeral plot in Rosemont Cemetery. Five hundred brethren gathered to witness the last sad rites at the graveside close to nightfall on November 6, 1916.⁷

Sketching the feelings and emotions of the occasion, a close follower later wrote:

“Upon a hillside ... we gathered round upon that hallowed ground to pay our last sad tribute to the one we loved ... How ineffable the beauty of the scene! So peaceful and so still! The gently rolling hills, far as the eye can reach, reminding us that, ‘As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth, even forever.’ ...

“The sacred silence is broken only by the singing of our choir, like angel voices floating out upon the evening air:

‘How vain is all beneath the skies!
How transient every earthly bliss!
How slender all the fondest ties
That bind us to a world like this!’

“Above the purple haze, and low within the western sky, the last faint, crimson glow of sunset slowly pales into the silvery whiteness that precedes the night. And lo! the evening star! How like a star was our beloved! And how he shed the rays of truth divine into the darkness of our minds and changed that darkness to ‘His marvelous light!’

‘The evening cloud, the morning dew,
The withering grass, the fading flower,
Of earthly hopes are emblems true,
The glory of a passing hour.’

“How exquisitely expressive of all about us! The withered grass beneath our feet, the fading flowers upon the upturned earth, and here and there the bare, brown trees, a few crisp leaves still faintly fluttering on their boughs. Their fruit has all been gathered, and they speak to us of harvest soon to end. ‘In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.’ Did our beloved Pastor bear much fruit? Ah, yes! How much, he may now know as he hath never fully known before!

‘But, though earth’s fairest blossoms die,
And all beneath the skies is vain,
There is a brighter age now nigh,
Beyond the reach of care and pain.’ ...

“With eyelids closed, and sorrowing hearts, we bowed our heads in final prayer with one who also loved and labored with him to the end. And then in silent little groups the friends departed from the scene ... Now it had grown strangely dark [and] no object was discernible on either side of the road ...

“How wondrously appropriate all had been! The suggestion of the harvest soon to end, the ingathering of the ripened fruits, the softly falling twilight ... and now

the darkness and loneliness of the flock of sheep whose faithful shepherd had been ‘smitten!’ ”

The writer then continued with these moving words:

“How necessary now to walk still more ‘by faith’ in the Great Shepherd of us all, the One who is ‘too wise to err, too good to be unkind’; ‘who doeth all things well.’ Be brave, be strong, weep not, have faith in God!”⁸

Last Will and Testament

Already in 1907, Pastor Russell had executed his Last Will and Testament, which was amended slightly the following year and once more in 1910. Even earlier he had donated his considerable fortune, the copyrights of his books and all his personal possessions to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the parent organization which directed the work of the movement. The greater part of the five-page Will was, therefore, devoted to detailed instructions as to how he desired the work of the ministry to be conducted after his decease.

It was commonly understood that in his lifetime the Pastor was filling the Scriptural office of “that Wise and Faithful Servant” and “the Seventh Messenger” to the church, for which there was no successor. Therefore, it was imperative for him to outline in detail how he desired the work to be directed in the event of his departure.

The *Watch Tower* journal, which dealt with the foundational matters of faith, doctrine and Christian living, was the primary concern addressed in his Will. In the Pastor’s mind, it was important that the publication be placed under the supervision of not just one individual, but collectively in the hands of a group of competent brethren. Accordingly, he directed that a self-perpetuating Editorial Committee of five, the names of whom he supplied along with possible alternates, be set up to have full charge of the religious aspect of the work.

Only incidental reference was made to the Watch Tower corporation, which he considered the necessary legal arm to carry on the business end of the work. For that purpose, he had already stipulated in its Charter that it would be under the supervision of a Board of Directors consisting of seven members. These were to have full

control of the affairs of the corporation, with the officers selected by the Board and responsible to it. It was understood by all that only in the Pastor's lifetime would the President of the corporation (Pastor Russell) be able to appoint (technically, to elect) the Board of Directors, in that he was its founder and controlled the necessary voting shares to perform this responsibility.

Thus it was expressly to prevent any "spirit of ambition or pride or headship" from developing after his demise that these safeguards were planned, both for the corporation and the journal, and specified in his Will and other documents.⁹ Both in letter and in spirit, it was obvious that the Pastor did not desire nor anticipate that any one individual would succeed him or be placed in charge of the work. But how differently would the actual events unfold from what he had purposed! In the words of two observers close to the scene of action in those days:

"To have even surmised that there was an incipient apostasy in the midst of the directorate of the corporate structure ... **was unthinkable**. Yet, there it was, already to be revealed almost as soon as Pastor Russell had left these earthly scenes."¹⁰

Rumblings of Conspiracy and Intrigue

At the headquarters office, an alleged plot began to unfold that one historian dubbed a "bitter palace intrigue."¹¹ It has also been likened more to a political takeover by despots and usurpers than to the sincere efforts of Pastor Russell's followers to carry on in the administration of the Society's work. Terms such as "sordid," "behind-the-scenes scheming," "conspiracy" and "tyranny" have been used to describe what appeared to many as an almost unthinkable rebellious process to circumvent the Pastor's careful and best efforts to prevent headship from arising and taking over the reins of the organization.¹²

Several members of the Society's Board of Directors, who were later deposed from office, were moved to write:

"Little did we ... think that those who would undertake to manage the affairs of the Society after Brother Russell's death would attempt to pervert and change the

time-honored customs and usages left us by our dear Pastor, or that there would be introduced such flagrant and sweeping departures from the form of government as outlined in Brother Russell's Will and in the Charter of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, written by his own hand."¹³

Resuming the comments of the two observers previously cited:

"Almost at once, after the passing of Pastor Russell, there emerged one individual amongst the brethren, to seize control and domination of the Society and all that pertained to it, in complete violation of the provisions of Pastor Russell's Will and the Charter of the corporation."¹⁴

In rapid succession, this would-be leader allegedly proceeded to: (a) Declare Pastor Russell's Will technically invalid; (b) Arrange to have himself elected as the new President of the Society; (c) Prepare by-laws for adoption by the shareholders in which he declared himself (as President) the exclusive manager of the Watch Tower Society; (d) Appoint an Advisory Committee of three, not previously provided for, which in effect bypassed the authority of the seven-member Board of Directors, a majority of which had become oppositional to him; and (e) Dismiss twenty-five long-term members of the Bethel who disagreed with his policies, while soliciting support from the remaining workers under threat of expulsion if they refused.¹⁵

How was it possible for one individual allegedly to seize control of the group with almost military precision in seeming opposition to the Pastor's express wishes? A common conclusion of many was that this person had the advantage of being trained as a lawyer and the experience of serving for awhile as the Watch Tower's legal counsel. As such it was thought he was able skillfully to manipulate matters to assure his dominant role.¹⁶ Another source adds that the aspiring successor to the Pastor "was a man of fearsome personal power. Against his forceful personality, few people were able to stand."¹⁷

It was also charged that this same person conspired with two other prominent members of the headquarters staff to obtain for

himself the full powers and authority that originally had been vested exclusively in the hands of the founder. This was the contention of a leading member of the group who at first had been in favor of the new President. When he later became embroiled in controversy with the new head of the Society, he revealed stunning details of the alleged takeover:

“They began this conspiracy before the election. They prearranged every detail of the voting shareholders’ meeting Jan. 6 [1917]. [The aspiring President] prepared and [his co-conspirator] approved the resolutions that among other things were to secure for the President executive and managerial authority ...

“A week before the election [the would-be leader] furnished a brother with an account of the proceedings of the voting shareholders’ meeting for publication in the press of the country, telling of his election by the Secretary casting the ballot of the convention and of the unanimity of his election, and giving some of his speech of acceptance. The Editor of the *New York Herald* [one of many who were given the advance copy] commented on the prophetic gifts of ‘those Bethel people’ in being able to foretell just what would happen at the election!

“In this account [the aspiring President] failed to state that by his prearrangement the nominations were so closed, that there could be no other Presidential candidates for whom thousands of voting shares were instructed, and that he prepared the resolution recommending that he be made Executive and Manager. No political convention was ever more completely or more smoothly ‘bossed’ than the voting shareholders’ meeting Jan. 6.

“Certainly the remark that [the aspiring leader] made to me in July, when he explained how he arranged for the election of [a brother] to the Board, applies to the proceedings of the Jan. 6 meeting. [He said] ‘Of course ... you know all things of that character are arranged beforehand, just like matters connected with a political convention!’ ”¹⁸

New Leadership Emerges

After being elected President of the Society, the new leader spent the next several months consolidating his position. During this period he basically adhered, at least in the *Watch Tower* journal, to the teachings of the Pastor. Most of its articles were taken from the writings of the founder, and the status quo seemingly continued for a time.

However, matters did not run smoothly for the new President. His personality was vastly different from that of his predecessor and caused many of his associates to take offense. The Pastor in all his dealings with the brethren was noted for his kindness, his warmth and his tactfulness. But the new President was “a brusque and direct type of person”¹⁹ and gave the impression of acting in a curt and demanding manner.²⁰ A “marked contrast” was noted “between ... the benign and benevolent leadership of Pastor Russell ... and the strong, dictatorial policies of his successor.”²¹ Instead of building confidence and respect within the group, this caused considerable consternation and alienation.

Then in the summer of 1917, “it was as if a bombshell had exploded” within the Bethel Home. On the occasion of disclosing the availability of a major new publication entitled *The Finished Mystery*, “a startling announcement was made— ... four opposing directors [of the seven-member Board] had been removed and [the new President] had appointed four others to fill the vacancies.” While he claimed he had legal grounds for so doing, a major uproar ensued, and the door was opened for further rancor and discord.²²

Quoting again from the two observers cited earlier:

“The new President wanted no one to share in his control of all the affairs, both as to the business activities and as to the publication of the literature. If he was to carry on with a Board of Directors and several co-editors, they were to be, in effect, vassals of his.”²³

In agreement with this assertion is the comment of historian M. James Penton, who wrote:

“[The new President] was an autocrat who obviously believed that for the good of the society—and all Bible

Students—he should rule it with a rod of iron rather than simply administer the decisions of its board of directors ... It is obvious that from before the time of his first election, he intended to wield as much if not more power than his predecessor.”²⁴

Amplifying this charge of high-handedness and dictatorship in the new management of the society is yet another source:

“The change that occurred in organizational management at the Watch Tower meant a complete change in the spirit, policy, and methods of administration. Brethren who had served with Bro. Russell and who had occupied positions of trust and responsibility were dismissed for ... their stand in defense of principles of truth, love, justice, and righteousness and the life-work and ministry of Bro. Russell.”²⁵

The historian Penton adds this colorful commentary in summarizing the actions of the new President:

“In seizing complete control of the Watch Tower Society in 1917, [the new leader] acted fully as though he was carrying out a Communist party purge rather than protecting the society from ‘opposers.’ ”²⁶

By January 1918, the new President had entrenched himself in his position, dismissed all opposing brethren and was ready to place his own stamp on the movement. Within short order it would become evident to many observers that both the basic beliefs and the character of the organization were on a deviant course from what its founder, Pastor Russell, had envisioned. This perception, of course, was not the view of the new administration, which placed an entirely different interpretation on these events.

The new President vigorously denied that he had usurped power for himself; or electioneered to convince anyone to vote for him; or that he had violated the Pastor’s intentions as to how the work should be supervised after his death. He further said he was not inclined to change the direction of the organization and pointed to his forward-moving policies that had built on the public witnessing aspect of the Pastor’s ministry.²⁷ He did allow, however, that as an attorney of twenty-five years’ experience, it was his conviction

that “the work of the Society peculiarly require[d] the direction of one mind” and that governing by a group was neither efficient nor practical.²⁸

He blamed the controversy on the opposition of “disturbers” from within and declared that they were the conspirators—not himself and his loyal supporters. He saw in his selection as President the overruling hand of the Lord rather than the workings of fallible men. Furthermore, he was able to submit that the fellowship as a whole had expressed their confidence in him, as demonstrated by written support from many of the office workers and members of the Bethel family as well as a flood of letters received from all over the world.²⁹

Clearly a new administration had emerged and managed to survive the raging dispute. There may have been divided opinion as to its legitimacy, but there was no denying the long-term consequences that ensued: a splintering of the Bible Students, divided congregations in this country and abroad, and a mixed sentiment of how the work of Harvest should proceed. Some of these issues now will be examined briefly, especially as they are evidenced in the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) changes that took place as the new President exerted his authority.

Changes in Spirit, Doctrine and Policy

One of the first major efforts of the Society under its new management was stringently to push distribution of *The Finished Mystery*. This was a rather speculative apocalyptic commentary which many old-time Bible Students felt represented a much harsher, more condemnatory spirit against governmental powers and the clergy than that which had characterized the Pastor’s ministry. Since the First World War was yet raging, the attacks on militarism and on clergy support for the war effort contained in the book and in other tracts were not viewed favorably by the public and resulted in widespread persecution in this country and especially in Canada. Eight directors of the Society, including its President, were arrested by federal authorities in May 1918, on sedition charges and sent to prison for nine months. Upon their release, the President of the Society embarked on a program that would introduce major changes

in Bible Student organization and practice over the next twenty years.³⁰

In 1919 the Society began publishing a new magazine in addition to *The Watch Tower*, calling it *The Golden Age*. It did not seem to matter that doing so was in direct violation of the Pastor's last Will and Testament. The new President had fresh ideas and could visualize how a second journal of greater interest to the public could be used to spark a new, vigorous evangelizing campaign and be distributed from house to house. In short order, weekly reports of these witnessing activities by the class workers became mandatory and specific assignments of territory in the local neighborhoods were being made.³¹ The historian Penton observes: "Thus began one of the greatest proselytizing campaigns in history—one which continues to this day."³²

"NEW LIGHT." With ever increasing frequency, "new light" in doctrine began to issue from the Society's headquarters. By 1923 this trend was becoming quite evident. Most of these flashes of light were glaring departures from the "Truth" message which the brethren had received under Pastor Russell's ministry. With a new interpretation of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats in the October 15, 1923 *Watch Tower*, the judgment of the world was hastened by a thousand years and moved up from the Millennial to the Gospel Age. Now placed in jeopardy of "second death"—everlasting destruction—were all of mankind who rejected the Society's message and especially the ministers of the various denominational churches. And for years to come, the teaching regarding the "second death" would be expanded to encompass more and more classes of mankind declared to be out of harmony with Jehovah or His organization. It would also "be used as a whip to keep the [Watch Tower] workers in line," in a manner analogous to how the fear of Hell-fire had been used in orthodox Christian circles.³³

The March 1, 1925 issue of *The Watch Tower* contained an article entitled "Birth of the Nation," that was noteworthy for at least two reasons. First, it demonstrated the rising dictatorial power of the new President, in insisting his article appear in the journal despite being strenuously opposed by most of the editorial committee. And second, by common admission, it represented a "striking

departure” from the teachings of Pastor Russell. The article presented a new understanding of Revelation chapter 12, that identified the “woman” that gives birth as “God’s organization” instead of “the early Church”; the “dragon” as “the Devil’s organization” instead of “the Pagan Roman Empire”; and the “man child” as “the new kingdom, or new government” instead of “the papacy.” The new interpretation was intended to show that the Kingdom had already begun to function, and highlighted the role of the Society in this regard. It was hailed as the first clear explanation that “there are two distinct and opposing organizations—Jehovah’s [the Society] and Satan’s [primarily Christendom].” But many old-time Bible Students were offended and left the organization as a result.³⁴

WITNESSING EMPHASIS. The following year, the Society used a new tactic in its relentless campaign to pressure all its members to preach publicly. Many had resisted this work because of a continuing belief held over from Pastor Russell’s day that character-building or the work of attaining a Christ-like character was of fundamental importance and that door-to-door witnessing (promoting the Society’s publications) should not be made mandatory. Hence, the new leadership had to find ways to undermine the authority of the Pastor as “that wise and faithful servant” and to destroy the concept of sanctification as vital in the life of the Christian.³⁵

The first step in accomplishing these objectives was a May 1, 1926 article in *The Watch Tower* in which the term “character development” was completely discredited. It emphasized that more important than developing personal holiness in the Christian life was “doing things” in the active service of God and that such activity would give clear evidence of pursuing a course pleasing to God.³⁶ “The purpose of the Witnesses [from that point onward] was, put bluntly, ‘Never mind about your sweet, pious character. Get out and preach the Gospel. Then your character will take care of itself.’ ”³⁷

THE PASTOR DEMEANED. The follow-up to this was a January 1, 1927 *Watch Tower* article designed directly to undermine the Pastor’s reputation and lessen the continuing reliance upon his authority as God’s spokesman of the “last days.” It suggested that it was the Devil’s scheme to promote undue reliance upon the

reverence of man instead of upon God. The next month this was elaborated further by the stunning declaration that the Pastor was no longer to be considered as “that wise and faithful servant” of Matthew 24:45-47, and that this title was to be understood as applying to a class rather than an individual. This class was identified as “a collective servant, made up of all the members of the spirit-anointed body of Christ on earth.” More specifically, the “servant” was to be recognized as “God’s organization”; that is, the “one channel” that God was using—the Watch Tower and its hierarchy. Thus, step by step, the new leader was enhancing his own authority, while diminishing that of his predecessor.³⁸

MORE “NEW LIGHT.” In the years that followed, the discovery and proclamation of “new light” by the Society became a hallmark of the group. These “new truths” were eagerly accepted by most of the Watch Tower believers, and, along with specially designated work efforts, helped to keep them enthusiastic and energized. Some of these “great works” that were taken up included: the “Elisha work”; “calling out the prisoners from Babylon”; “building the temple wall”; gathering the “Jonadabs”; casting up the “highway of holiness”; and offering “the waters of the river of life” to the people. It has been noted, however, that “it was truly remarkable how quickly each one of these gigantic tasks was undertaken and then forgotten,” all in a frenzy of misguided zeal based on fanciful interpretations of God’s Word.³⁹

One of the great tragedies accompanying the discovery of so-called “new light” was that it frequently entailed the complete contradiction of what had been taught and proven from the Scriptures through years of previous study. Thus, if one did not keep abreast of the latest Watch Tower teaching, he would not be in step with the “advancing light of Truth” or know what he was to believe. Even more bewildering as time went on has been a tendency to switch back and forth in interpretations, revising and reverting back to earlier beliefs which had been discredited for many years.

Some examples of doctrinal changes and tampering: Prior to 1927, those engaged in the “Elisha work” were said to be blessed with a “double portion of the Spirit”; but in 1927 it was announced that the church no longer possessed the Holy Spirit at all. In 1921 it

was believed that Restitution blessings on earth would be enjoyed by all mankind in the Millennial Kingdom; in 1934 this was denied. For more than ten years after Pastor Russell's demise, the Apostle Paul's teaching in Romans 13:1-7 was accepted as enjoining respect for the civil powers that be, since they are ordained of God for the general good of all. But in 1929 a radical reinterpretation condemned the secular state as "demonic and virtually without redeeming features."⁴⁰

Before long, even the doctrine of the Ransom Sacrifice of Christ was altered. For more than twenty years after Pastor Russell's death it was still taught that Jesus died for all men, including Adam; but in 1939 it was "discovered" that Adam was not redeemed by Christ and would not be resurrected. Other groups added to the list of those not redeemed and who would perish eternally, in contrast to the Pastor's views, included: the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Solomon, and the scribes and Pharisees. And of course, all dissenting Bible Students (called the "evil servant class") and all the clergy of Christendom were also condemned.⁴¹

Other adjustments that were made included: In 1923, character development was acknowledged as a work of God in the hearts of His people; in 1927, it became a delusion of the Devil. In 1924, true religion was recognized as being of God; in 1937, all religion was considered a snare of the Devil and a racket. In 1918, the church was not believed to be under the New Covenant; in 1934, it was. And a change of major proportions concerned a belief which had survived for more than fifteen years after the Pastor's death—that individual congregations were autonomous and Scripturally charged with electing elders and deacons as their class servants. In 1932, *The Watch Tower* called for the abolition of this custom and brought to an end the practice of democratically electing elders and deacons that had prevailed for more than fifty years.⁴²

NEW NAME ADOPTED. One of the most decisive and far-reaching of all the changes made by the Society was the adoption of a new name, as announced at the Columbus, Ohio convention in July 1931. Pastor Russell, through all the years of his ministry, had counseled against taking on a "sectarian" name and was quite satisfied with the general appellation, "Bible Students." But the new

President was anxious to find a name that would serve as a psychological break with their Bible Student past and at the same time call attention to their unique and distinctive role as witnesses of Jehovah. Hence, in what has been widely regarded as a “bold stroke of genius,” the name “Jehovah’s Witnesses” was adopted. Although it resulted in still more loyal Bible Students leaving the Society, it unified all the remaining members of the growing organization and highlighted their public preaching activities.⁴³

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY. Another important change, especially to old-time Bible Students, pertained to Israel and its proper identity. Under the Pastor, the natural Jews were believed to have a special role in the Plan of God, both as a typical people selected to foreshadow grander realities and as being regathered in the last days in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The many prophetic passages of the Old Testament dealing with the reestablishment of Israel as a nation were taken literally and as a prerequisite to their becoming a teacher nation to lead mankind back to God in the Kingdom. But in 1932 all of this was changed as replacement theology took hold: It was only “spiritual Israel” that was to be favored in the grand restoration of the End Time, and this was interpreted as being none other than the Witnesses themselves. And thus at last the real “Israel of God” was thought to have been identified!⁴⁴ Hence, not only was the descriptive name of natural Israel appropriated to themselves exclusively, but their promises as well.

PERISHING AT ARMAGEDDON. The “vindication” of the name of Jehovah had become the theme of the group by 1934 and has remained a rallying cry ever since. Earlier, under the ministry of Pastor Russell, the central doctrine had been that of the Ransom Sacrifice of Christ, emphasizing God’s love in providing the opportunity of everlasting life to all. But under the new leadership, the emphasis shifted from God’s loving-kindness to that of His wrath toward all who willingly defy God and refuse to obey His precepts. Ultimate vindication was seen as occurring in the last days of this wicked world: Only by choosing to join with Jehovah (“flee to the organization” for protection) could any be saved. Those who remained aloof (did not join with the Witnesses) would perish in the Battle of Armageddon. Thus by bearing witness to such a message,

according to their own viewpoint the Witnesses were doing nothing for the masses who did not receive it except to make them liable to the “second death” (everlasting destruction).⁴⁵

“GREAT MULTITUDE” ON EARTH. According to historian Penton, probably the most significant factor contributing to the rapid growth of the Witnesses after 1935 was the new doctrine of “the great multitude” (or “great crowd”). Earlier Pastor Russell had taught that the elect church consisted of the 144,000 enumerated in Revelation 7:4 and 14:1, and that another class, termed a “great company” or “great multitude” in Revelation 7:9 and 19:6,9, would also receive a heavenly reward but on a lower plane of existence. But when it was becoming evident that many in the Society were more interested in a future life on earth rather than in heaven (these were termed “Jonadabs”) and when their numbers continued to increase, there may have been strong reason to switch the identity of the “great multitude” class from a heavenly to an earthly one.⁴⁶

Accordingly, at the May 1935 Washington, D.C. convention, the Society’s President declared that “the great multitude” were in fact the same as the good sheep of the parable of Matthew 25 and that they constituted an earthly, not a heavenly, class. With this new understanding, the Society faithful “were infused with renewed zeal for the work of witnessing.” More than ever, they were motivated to “gather the multitude” and save as many of earth’s inhabitants as possible, before it would be too late.⁴⁷

Summary

Thus it could be said that by the sheer force and hardness of the new President’s personality and his organizational abilities, a complete metamorphosis of the Watch Tower Society⁴⁸ was brought about over a period of some twenty years. Starting with the loose association of Bible Students that remained after the benign leadership of Pastor Russell, he was able to build a highly structured, “theocratically” controlled organization bearing the name of his choice—Jehovah’s Witnesses. And thus what once had been a free and open, democratically governed group, step by step was transformed into a tightly controlled hierarchical structure ruled at the top by one man who was a virtual dictator.⁴⁹

In light of these developments within the Society after the death of Pastor Russell, it becomes evident what a severe and continuing trial it must have been to those Bible Students remaining in harmony with the founder of the movement and his teachings. The changes in spirit, doctrine and policy, while subtle at first, became increasingly clear: Their tone was authoritarian, the message was no longer the Plan of God for blessing mankind, and even the intensity of activity engendered was based to a significant degree on erroneous beliefs and misguided zeal. Consequently, for many of the old-time believers, there was no alternative but to separate themselves and seek to regain their spiritual balance.

How these scattered Bible Students reestablished their contacts with each other and subsequently regrouped will be sketched in Chapter 11. First, however, we would like to consider whether the role of Pastor Russell has been depicted in the Scriptures. Many of the Bible Students were convinced that his special position of service was described in various Bible texts, and such a belief continues to be commonly held today.

Endnotes: Chapter 9

1. W. M. Wisdom, *The Laodicean Messenger* (hereafter cited as Wisdom), pp. 213-229.
2. Wisdom, pp. 235-238.
3. Wisdom, pp. 238-239.
4. *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (hereafter cited as Proclaimers), p. 63.
5. *When Pastor Russell Died* (Dawn Bible Students Association booklet, by W. Norman Woodworth), (hereafter cited as *Pastor Died*), p. 1.
6. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), "The Funeral Services," Dec. 1, 1916, p. 6000.
Note: The date given in this article for the arrival of the Pastor's remains in New York, accompanied by his traveling secretary, Menta Sturgeon, is incorrect. It is given as "Friday morning, November 10," but should have been listed as "November 3." The correct sequence for the final days' activities was:
Sat., Nov. 4: Viewing of remains at Bethel Home.
Sun., Nov. 5: Morning, afternoon and evening services at the Temple in New York City.
Mon., Nov. 6: Fourth part of service at 2 P.M. in Carnegie Music Hall in Allegheny; and at dusk the graveside rite in Rosemont Cemetery.
(See *1916 Convention Report*, pp. 321, 324; *Pastor Russell's Convention Discourses*, pp. 504, 507.)
7. *Reprints*, "Closing Scenes in New York and Pittsburgh," Dec. 1, 1916, p. 6016.
8. *Reprints*, "At the Grave Side," Dec. 1, 1916, pp. 6016-6017. (This was a letter submitted by Gertrude W. Seibert, a regular contributor of sacred poems to the journal through the years.)
9. *Reprints*, "Will and Testament of Charles Taze Russell," Dec. 1, 1916, p. 5999; and A. N. Pierson, J. D. Wright, A.I. Ritchie, I. F. Hoskins, R. H. Hirsh (hereafter cited as Pierson, et al), *Light After Darkness*, Sept. 1, 1917, pp. 5, 22.
10. *Watchers of the Morning* (hereafter cited as *Watchers*), "Watchman, What of the Night?—A Review of Events in the Truth Ministry Since 1916," Jan. 1955 (hereafter cited as "Review Since 1916"), p. 3.
11. Edwin S. Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, "Jehovah's Witnesses," p. 118.

12. *Watchers*, “Review Since 1916,” pp. 4-5; and *Light After Darkness*, referenced by the authors of the *Watchers* article and described as “a publication ... issued Sept. 1, 1917, by certain brethren who withstood the [new] President [of the Society] in his ruthless and unjust treatment of all the Lord’s people who were looking for spiritual leadership.”
13. Pierson, et al, *Light After Darkness*, p. 3.
14. *Watchers*, “Review Since 1916,” p. 5.
15. Pierson, et al, *Light After Darkness*, pp. 3, 7, 9, 11-12; *Watchers*, “Review Since 1916,” p. 5; Paul S. L. Johnson (hereafter cited as Johnson), “*Harvest Siftings*” *Reviewed*, Nov. 1, 1917 (hereafter cited as *Siftings Reviewed*), p. 18.
16. Johnson, *Siftings Reviewed*, p. 18; Pierson, et al, *Light After Darkness*, pp. 17, 18, 19; A. O. Hudson, *Bible Students in Britain*, p. 88.
17. Marley Cole (hereafter cited as Cole), *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, p. 87.
18. Johnson, *Siftings Reviewed*, p. 18.
Note: It was Joseph F. Rutherford who was elected President of the Society to become the successor of Pastor Russell. He came to be known as “Judge” Rutherford because for a time he had served as special judge in the Eighth Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri. He had been baptized with the Bible Students in 1906. (*Proclaimers*, pp. 65, 67.)
19. *Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, p. 68.
20. Historian M. James Penton draws a much sharper contrast between the two men: He observes that Pastor Russell had been admired for “his tireless zeal and dynamic personality,” while at the same time “noted for ... his warmth and personal kindness,” a laudable combination of traits. But his aspiring replacement was painted as “doubtlessly a hard, ruthless, and frequently cantankerous person.” Further, that “he was moody and sometimes blunt to the point of rudeness with an explosive temper ... used vulgar language, and suffered from ... a serious case of alcoholism.” (*Apocalypse Delayed*, pp. 26, 47-48, 72, 75.)
21. *The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom*, Special supplement: “Who Are the Bible Students?,” Nov.-Dec. 1993 (hereafter cited as *Herald Supplement*), “Preface,” by the editor (Carl Hagensick), p. 2.
22. *Proclaimers*, pp. 66-68.
Note: The book entitled *The Finished Mystery*, at the time of its release by the publishers, was heralded as the posthumous work of

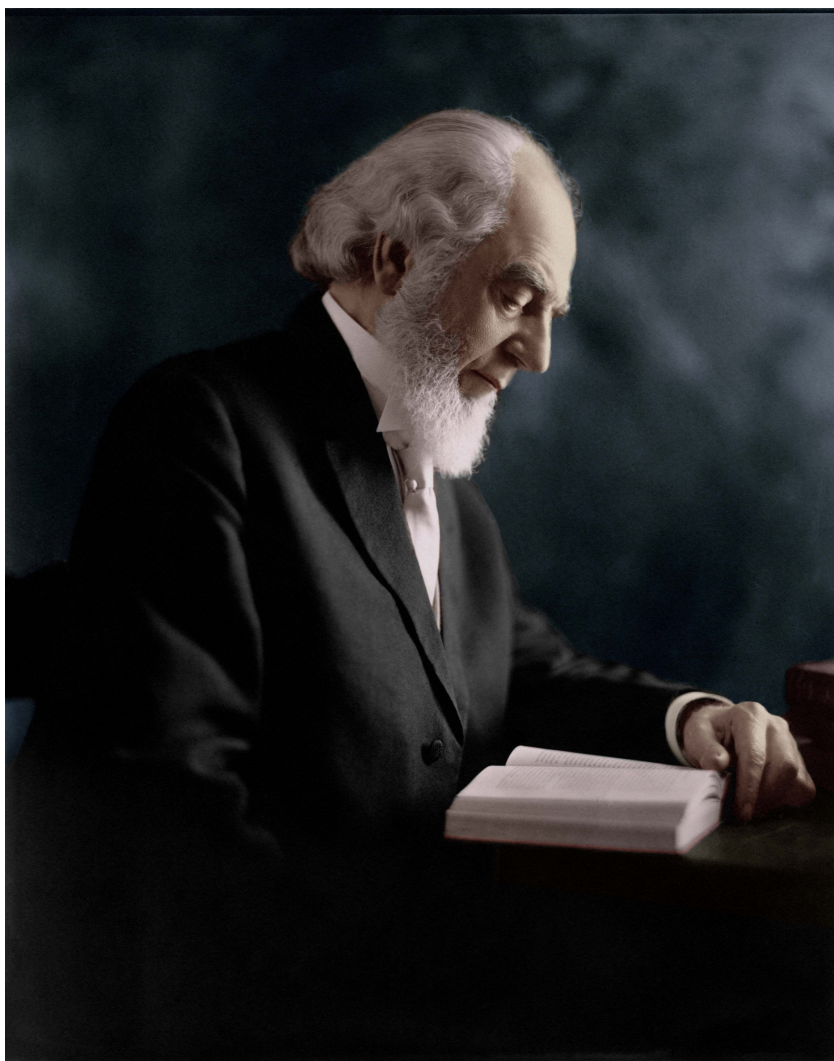
Pastor Russell and the Seventh Volume of the *Studies in the Scriptures* series: see Title Page of the work and Publisher's preface.

This claim was strenuously denied by many Bible Students who had been close to the Pastor and ran against the expectations of the fellowship as a whole. See, for example, *The Laodicean Messenger*, p. 245, and *Reprints*, "Address at Morning Service," Dec. 1, 1916, p. 6000. In 1916, the year in which he died, the Pastor himself clearly said, "There are certain things in Revelation which I do not understand, and for this reason I do not write the Seventh Volume ... We will leave that until God shall give us some further light on the book of Revelation, and we will try then to explain the book as a whole ... Because it is not yet clear as a whole, and I do not wish to put any speculation or guessing into it, therefore do not wish to write anything until the Lord shall make it all plain ... Therefore we are waiting—waiting on the Lord ... You will get it just as soon as He gives the explanation." (*What Pastor Russell Said*, pp. 645-646.)

Penton properly observes that the book, *The Finished Mystery*, claimed to be the long-awaited "seventh volume," was in fact "made up of various comments from Russell's works, plus numerous additions by the co-authors, Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher, in a commentary on Revelation, Ezekiel, and the Song of Solomon." (Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, pp. 50-51.)

23. *Watchers*, "Review Since 1916," p. 5.
24. M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (hereafter cited as Penton), p. 48.
25. *Herald Supplement*, "The Pastoral Bible Institute," p. 23.
26. Penton, p. 53.
27. *Proclaimers*, p. 66; J. F. Rutherford, *Harvest Siftings*, Aug. 1, 1917 (hereafter cited as Rutherford), p. 19.
28. Rutherford, p. 10.
29. *Proclaimers*, pp. 66-68; Rutherford, pp. 10, 12, 14, 18, 19.
30. *Proclaimers*, pp. 69-70; Penton, p. 55.
31. *Proclaimers*, pp. 76-77; Penton, p. 56.
32. Penton, p. 57.
33. *Pastor Died*, pp. 7-10; *Proclaimers*, p. 164.
34. *Proclaimers*, pp. 78-79; Penton, pp. 59, 351-352.
35. Penton, p. 60.
36. Penton, p. 60; *Proclaimers*, pp. 172-173, 292.

37. Cole, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 102.
38. Penton, pp. 60-61; *Proclaimers*, pp. 143, 626.
39. *Pastor Died*, p. 11.
40. *Pastor Died*, pp. 11-12; Penton, p. 65.
41. *Pastor Died*, p. 12; Penton, p. 65.
42. *Pastor Died*, p. 12; Penton, pp. 63-64.
43. Penton, p. 62; *Proclaimers*, pp. 149-158.
44. Penton, p. 65; *Proclaimers*, pp. 141-142.
45. Penton, pp. 69-70; *Pastor Died*, p. 13.
46. Penton, pp. 71-72; *Proclaimers*, pp. 165-166.
47. Penton, p. 72; *Proclaimers*, pp. 166-170.
48. Current references by the Jehovah's Witnesses to their governing Society use the form "Watch Tower" (two words) in contrast to their magazine that is termed *Watchtower* (one word). However, two of their legal corporations are: "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania" (two words), and "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc." (one word). (*Proclaimers*, p. 229.)
49. Penton, pp. 5-6, 75.



The Pastor at Age 64, Near the Close of his Ministry (1916)

Impressive portrayals of his role seem to be found in Scripture, including “That Wise and Faithful Servant,” “The Seventh Messenger,” and “The Man with the Writer’s Inkhorn.”

10

His Role Portrayed in Scripture

IN ASSESSING the work of Pastor Russell on the religious scene of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America, from whatever criteria one might select, it becomes evident that a significant impact was made. His strong leadership of the Bible Student movement, his dynamic abilities as preacher, author and popular syndicated writer, his refutation of the creedal errors of the Dark Ages and his insights into God's Plan of the Ages were all impressive. As a consequence, it was only natural that his ardent supporters would scan the Scriptures to see if they could uncover any prophetic portrayals of this outstanding messenger of God.

Throughout his voluminous writings, it is difficult to find a direct claim on the Pastor's part to have fulfilled any such Scriptural, prophetic descriptions. To the contrary, in answering a question posed at a convention gathering in 1910, and sensing the enthusiastic desire of the brethren to identify him with Scripture, he sternly counseled them against it:

“My advice is that you do not search the Scriptures to find anything about Brother Russell, but that you

search to find things about the ‘Glorious One’ whom we all reverence.”¹

Somewhat later, in a special meeting for pilgrims, elders and deacons, he said:

“Some of the dear brethren seem to find as much about Brother Russell in the Bible as they find about the Lord Jesus, and I think that is a great mistake. I do not find it there ... I think there is a danger of some dear friends preaching Brother Russell. Brother Russell would like for you not to do so. He thinks it would not be to the glory of God.”²

Yet, despite these well-intentioned words, Bible Students in the Pastor’s day and ever since have indeed linked him to specific Bible texts. Let us examine some of the more common passages that are applied to him and see if such characterization is warranted.

That Wise and Faithful Servant

By far the text most frequently referred to is found in Our Lord’s Great Prophecy, which speaks of the End of the Age, Christ’s presence (*parousia*) and the events that would prevail at that time. The particular verse reads as follows:

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.”
(Matt. 24:45-47)

In the verses immediately following, Jesus also spoke of an “evil servant” who “shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants.” (Matt. 24:48-49) Thus, in rapid succession, Jesus used the terms “faithful and wise servant,” “household,” “that servant” (who is made ruler), “evil servant” (who is punished) and “fellow-servants” (helpers in dispensing the “meat in due season”).

Using a concordance and other standard Bible references, additional light is thrown on these words. “Servant” (*doulos*) usually means bond-servant or slave, in the sense that the Apostle Paul was

described as a servant of Christ, fully consecrated to his service. (Rom. 1:1) In Luke 12:42, paralleling the Matthew account, the word “steward” (*oikonomos*) is used, suggesting a position of great authority in handling the affairs of his master. Twice in our opening texts the Greek word *kathistemi* is used—in the phrases “hath made ruler over his household” and “shall make him ruler over all his goods.” The word means “to set down” and elsewhere is variously rendered as to ordain, make, or appoint; kingship or lordship is not necessarily implied.

The Pastor comments on this word “ruler” as follows:

“The word ‘**ruler**’ in [Luke 12] verses 42, 44 and Matt. 24:45, 47, of the common version, does not properly express the thought of the original: the Revised Version is preferable: ‘set over his household **to give them** meat’ as a ‘steward,’ not as a lord or master—rather a general servant, or servant of all.”³

Bringing these definitions and usages to bear on the text, it tells us that a faithful and wise servant was to be appointed or set in a special position by his lord to serve the household. In its fulfillment at the End of the Gospel Age, “his lord” would be the Lord Jesus at his invisible return (*parousia*), who appointed this steward to dispense the meat or spiritual food to the household of faith. When the servant was found to be faithfully carrying out this office, he would be set over all his Master’s goods—he would be privileged to understand and promulgate further Truths from God’s Word, even all the beautiful and harmonious doctrines of the Divine Plan.

In view of the Pastor’s outstanding role as herald of the Millennial Day and as successor to the series of independent reform movements that swept the churches immediately prior to his time, the identification of “that servant” with Pastor Russell seems strong. It becomes yet more conclusive when his work is recognized as having occurred about the time of our Lord’s *parousia* in the late nineteenth century, in harmony with Jesus’ forecast. To the Bible Students, there is no other candidate who carefully brought together the restored Truths of the “cleansed sanctuary” class and made them available to the household of faith—as a trustworthy servant.

The Pastor, as capable manager of the Lord's work, was able to organize an effective band of workers—"fellow-servants"—who rallied to the cause and gave unselfishly of themselves to help proclaim the Truth message to all of the household of faith and beyond. It was indeed a "Harvest" work, occurring at "the end of the age" (Matt. 13:39), and it reaped the fruitage of many laborers who had gone before. And it was also the time for the "meat in due season" to be provided—the dispensational Truths of God's Plan which were reserved for the End Time when they were to be fully revealed and appreciated as they could not have been in any former era.

As noted earlier, the closing thought of the text is that the faithful servant would be placed in charge or set over all his Master's goods. Bible Students fervently believe that Pastor Russell was specially guided in his study of God's Word and was privileged to understand and proclaim all that the returned Lord deemed needful to nourish and sustain the household of faith. This does not mean that the Pastor was "inspired" in his utterances as were the writers of the Bible, or without personal blemish. He made some mistakes, but to the extent humanly possible, as a faithful steward, he could be trusted to oversee the unfolding work of Harvest. The impressive record of his ministry, as noted earlier, including delivering some thirty thousand sermons on aspects of God's Plan, writing over fifty thousand pages of Bible comments, pastoring a growing flock around the world and standing for the defense of the Gospel against the inroads of "higher criticism" and modernism, all testify to his filling this special office.

Notwithstanding the facts of the case which were abundantly in evidence to his followers, Pastor Russell himself, in characteristic modesty, seldom discussed the text describing "that wise and faithful servant." Only when severely pressed to admit his proper identification with it, would he reluctantly not deny it, and even then usually only in private.

In 1895, when the text appeared as part of the regularly featured International Sunday School lessons (Matt. 24:42-51, and Luke 12:37-48 as well), he wrote an article in his journal dealing with it. He treated the term "that servant" in a general way as

though it were really plural in form—as “servants.”⁴ But this was not acceptable to his readers, who deluged him with dissenting communications and necessitated a later clarification. Hence, about a year later, he amended his thoughts in a follow-up article entitled “That Servant.” He wrote:

“Since [our last article] we have been met from various quarters with objections to so general an application, and the suggestion that it would be wrong to allow modesty or any other consideration, good or bad, to warp our judgment in the exposition of the inspired Word; to which proposition we agree ...

“Being unable to answer the objections and arguments raised, we candidly present them to the ‘fellow-servants’ and to the ‘household’ of faith as part of the Lord’s message ... Let each ‘fellow-servant’ and each member of the ‘household of faith’ use his consecrated judgment in accepting or rejecting this exposition, or any other exposition we may ever offer, according to his ability or inability to recognize in it the voice of our great Shepherd.

“The objection urged is that the Lord’s words clearly mention and distinguish between his ‘household’ (his faithful people in general), the ‘fellow-servants’ (plural), and ‘**that servant**’ specially indicated as the Lord’s agent in dispensing present truth as food to his ‘fellow-servants’ and the ‘household’ ... When [these terms] are all mentioned in one connection, and in **contrast**, it would be a perversion of the rules of language and interpretation to mix and confound that which the holy Spirit has so emphatically marked as distinct ... [The] ‘meat in due season’ is intended only for the Lord’s truth-hungry, ‘watching’ people; and hence among these must be sought the ‘household’ to be fed, the ‘servants’ (plural) to do the feeding, and ‘that servant’ at whose hands our **present** Lord will dispense the food to ‘his fellow-servants’ for ‘the household;’ and who thus is constituted a general steward, overseer and dispenser of the Lord’s ‘goods.’

“It is urged, further, that the manifest **fulfilment** of this, during this ‘harvest’ and time of the Lord’s **presence**, should assist in the correct understanding of the promise; and that when we see things come to pass we should be able to recognize them whether we discerned their meaning in advance or not. Indeed, the demonstration seems to have forced the true interpretation ...

“It is further suggested that whoever occupies the position of ‘**that** servant’ occupies a place of special danger, as well as of special privilege; that only by humility and faithfulness can he continue; and that, although not so stated in the Scriptures, it may be inferred that if the chosen one should fail, another would be chosen to be ‘**that** servant’ or steward through whom the Master would continue to supply the ‘meat in due season’ to those deemed worthy to continue at his table.

“We submit the argument without comment.”⁵

Thus it may be said that the Pastor came very close to admitting (though reluctantly) what his followers had appreciated almost from the start—that he indeed had been selected by the Lord to fill a special office in the Harvest time at the closing of the Gospel Age.

The Seventh Messenger

In the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:12-20) seven prominent churches are described as being established during the apostolic period in Asia Minor. “In the midst” of these churches, “one like unto the Son of Man” is shown, holding “in his right hand seven stars.” This is followed by the explanation that “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” Revelation chapters 2 and 3 then go on to list the names of these seven churches and to describe in some detail their characteristics, both good and bad.

Bible expositors through the age have been intrigued by the accounts of these churches and have speculated as to their application. In each instance, John the Revelator was instructed to write to “the angel of [that particular] church,” bearing a message from the Lord Jesus in commendation or reproof. Were these messages

intended only for the literal churches established in the named cities of that era? Were they intended in a general way to apply to the worldwide church that would develop throughout the Gospel Age? Or were they actually prophetic of seven historical periods of the church, with each successive period reflecting the conditions ascribed to the original churches?

Many have concluded that Truth is found in all of these possibilities. Bible Students are among those who especially tend to emphasize the last view—that there is a progressive aspect to the messages, covering seven marked historical stages in the development of the church through the ages. Thus, the church at Ephesus would represent the conditions prevailing during the apostolic age; Smyrna, the early persecutions of the Christians; Pergamos, the rise of the apostate church; Thyatira, the Dark Ages of medieval times; Sardis, the pre-Reformation era; Philadelphia, the Protestant Reformation; and Laodicea, the lukewarm end-time nominal church.⁶

Each of these stages in the unfolding history of the church is believed to be guided by one of the stars or angels that are closely held in the right hand of the Son of Man. An angel (*angelos*), literally “messenger,” can be either a celestial or an earthly being, “sent whether by God or by man or by Satan.”⁷ The angels of the seven churches are thought to be human messengers who have been given a special charge to oversee and direct the interests of the successive stages of the church. The earlier messengers (Paul, John and Arius, by a wide consensus) were leaders of the Lord’s people who were active in establishing the church, elaborating its basic beliefs and practices, and encouraging the believers to faithfulness. The later messengers (Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther and Russell, by a smaller consensus) were active in pointing out discrepancies and the non-Biblical elements of worship that had crept into the apostate church, and they attempted various reforms.

Pastor Russell is widely understood by the Bible Students to be the seventh (and final) of these messengers to the church. It is believed that he was privileged to restore and dispense the whole framework of Truth that had been set forth by Jesus and the Apostles, much of which had been lost or compromised through the Gospel Age. His ministry included vigorous exposés of false doctrines

such as the Trinity, Hell-fire, and inherent Immortality of the soul, plus a clear presentation of God's Plan of the Ages. All of this was seen as completing the reformation efforts of the earlier messengers.

The main text that speaks of the seventh angel to the churches is found in Revelation 3:14-22. It begins, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God ..."

There follows a listing of the characteristics of the believers of that time which is wholly uncomplimentary and which uses harsh and condemnatory terms: The Laodicean members were lukewarm, self-satisfied and deluded; they considered themselves rich, but were actually spiritually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They were urged to respond to Jesus' reproofs, repent of their sins and regain their spiritual integrity. They were counseled to obtain the true heavenly riches—"gold tried in the fire"—at the cost of self-sacrifice and suffering for Christ; to "anoint [their] eyes with eyesalve"—that they might perceive the unfolding of God's Plan of blessing and to appreciate the significance of troublous end-time events leading to His Kingdom. And finally they were invited to open to the "knock ... at the door" and to listen to the "voice" of Jesus—to recognize their returned Lord by the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and the cataclysmic events transpiring in the world at that time.

How in every particular this seems to match the worldly and hostile setting of the church at the time of Pastor Russell's ministry! Outwardly, magnificent church edifices abounded, but inwardly there was a hollow of formalized ritual that had lost the vibrancy of Truth—"the faith once delivered unto the saints." "Higher criticism," modernism, and the theory of evolution were taking their toll. Emphasis was on form and ceremony, not on essentials of the Word; on building more elaborate churches, not on dedication to God and the consecrated life. Focusing on the "social gospel" and influencing world affairs had become more important than preparing the believer for the life which was to come.

It was the Pastor who duly noted all these trends as evidences of God's rejection of Christendom as a whole. He saw the need to encourage the saints to renew their zeal and determination to be

faithful to the Word of God. It was the time of Harvest, when the ripe wheat was to be reaped, the invisible Return of our Lord announced, prophetic fulfillments understood, and the message of Millennial Hope proclaimed.

Hence, the role of Pastor Russell as the seventh messenger seems impressive and coincides closely with the events and characteristics of the end-time Laodicean church. Who else can be cited that was able to uplift the hearts of the faithful and arouse their hope in the imminent establishment of Messiah's Kingdom and the blessings of the Millennium to follow? To Bible Students, the answer is convincingly clear.

The Man with the Writer's Inkhorn⁸

The Book of Ezekiel, one of the major prophetic books of the Old Testament, is written in highly symbolic language similar to that of the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. Chapter 9 of Ezekiel sketches a very remarkable scene that is dominated by a "man clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side" and six other men who are carrying "slaughter weapon[s]." Preceding chapters of the book speak of "wicked abominations" that are committed in Israel and Judah, evils that "have filled the land with violence" and provoked the Lord to anger. The man with the inkhorn by his side is commissioned by God to "go through the midst of the city . . . of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." The six men with the slaughter weapons are also given instructions by the Lord, but their work is to "slay utterly old and young"—those who do not receive the special "mark."

Many Bible Students take this as an end-of-the-age scenario, wherein Pastor Russell is pictured as the man with the writer's inkhorn who conveys the mark by delivering the unvarnished message of Truth. A white robe in ancient times frequently pictured a man of authority, either in priestly garb or as an official of government. The "writer's inkhorn" emphasizes the written aspect of the message, through the printed page. The power and impact of such a message would endure even after the death of the messenger so used.

Israel and Judah in the sense used here are taken as symbols of wayward Christendom, filled with abominations of doctrine and oppression of the people. Those “that sigh and that cry” recognize the wretched conditions prevailing there—its worldly spirit, God-dishonoring creeds and lack of spirituality—and sense the fast-approaching judgment of God. Distraught with the outward show of splendor and the lack of substance within, they “mourn in Zion” (Isa. 61:3) and are ready to receive the “mark upon the forehead”: an intellectual appreciation of the pure message of Truth and hope from the Bible.

Next is portrayed the ominous work of the six men with slaughter weapons who figuratively slay utterly those who have not received the special mark. These six are taken to represent spokesmen of various “isms” and schools of thought that have arisen in contemporary End Times and fastened themselves upon the fabric of society and especially upon Christendom. Six specific nefarious influences that have been suggested are: evolution (Darwin), psychoanalysis (Freud), radical socialism (Marx), agnosticism (Ingersoll), the Christian Science religion (Mary Baker Eddy) and spiritism, the forerunner to the New Age movement (Madame Blavatsky). Whether fully recognized or not, the work of these six “men” has largely been to destroy true faith in God and the Bible, leaving almost an empty shell likened to the “habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” (Rev. 18:2)

The last verse of Ezekiel chapter 9 reads: “And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.” Pastor Russell, as we have already seen, is believed to be the instrument used of God to recapture the Truths that had been lost through centuries of neglect, organize them into a message of gladness and hope, and dispense them in clear and understandable commentaries on the Bible. His voluminous writings offer testimony to his faithfulness in revealing the great love of the Creator and His grand program for restoring harmony on earth through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The Pastor’s entire life was devoted to promoting this cause.

Pastor Russell never officially claimed to be “the man with the writer’s inkhorn.” Nevertheless, an unusual incident that occurred near the time of his death gives pause for reflection. On the train that was returning the terminally ill Pastor to Bethel after his last speaking engagement, he asked his traveling companion to make a simulated white toga from the bed sheets. Immediately prior to his death, he arose from his bed, wrapped himself in the toga, stood erect for a moment, then lay down to rest again.⁹ It was a symbolic act that many of his followers interpreted as an acknowledgment by the Pastor that he indeed believed he had fulfilled the role of “the man clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side.” It appeared to be his final way of reporting to the Lord, “I have done as thou hast commanded me.”

Other Possible Depictions¹⁰

In addition to the Scriptures already mentioned, there are others which have been suggested as possible further portrayals of the role of Pastor Russell. Some are barely more than a single text; others are more extensive. We will list some of these here in separate categories, with brief explanations.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. Isaiah 21:11,12—A “watchman” is here depicted as being asked, “How far gone is the night?” and answering, “Morning has come, and still it is night” (from a composite translation based upon the New American Standard and Revised Swedish Bible). As a watchman studying prophetic time features of the Bible, Pastor Russell came to the realization that the “last times” had begun. When asked whether the long nighttime of sin and death was coming to a close, he replied that the morning of the new (thousand-year Millennial) day had already commenced. The chronology of the Bible convinced him that the first six thousand years of man’s history had ended, but that the dark clouds of trouble that precede the Kingdom blessings would persist for a time. This knowledge that the Harvest—the End of the Age and time for reaping—had begun, spurred and motivated him to enter the full-time ministry and zealously proclaim the Truth message far and wide, as previously shown.

Daniel 12:5-8—Here a “man clothed in linen” is seen standing “upon the waters” (a flood of Truth in the End Times) and explaining

that it would be for three and one-half symbolic “times” until the end of the abominations and scattering “of the holy people.” Whereas other expositors, especially of Adventist background, were able to approximate the “days of Daniel,” Pastor Russell tied these in specifically with other time prophecies and important calculations of Bible chronology. He reckoned the three and one-half “times” (1,260 years) that Antichrist was permitted to persecute the saints as reaching to the year 1799, the beginning of the “Time of the End.”

Habakkuk 2:1-3—This is a description of the Lord’s spokesman standing upon a watch post or tower, receiving instructions regarding the End-Time “vision” that he was to “make plain ... [to] everyone.” See earlier discussion of this prophecy in Chapter 6 under the heading “The End-Time Vision.”

IN THE GOSPELS. Matthew 13:52—In this text, a “scribe [who] is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven ... bring[s] forth out of his treasure things new and old.” Much of Pastor Russell’s message consisted of clarifications of Truths that had already been uncovered by other men of God and Bible expositors of the past. This included Conditional Immortality, rejection of the Trinity and Hell-fire, some details of the Second Advent, identifying the Antichrist system, and the exact Bible chronology. In contrast, he also expounded relatively new Truths that had been lost, such as details concerning the Ransom, the Sin Offering, the Restoration of Israel, and Restitution blessings.

IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. There are a number of texts, such as:

Rev. 8:6 and 11:15—The seventh angel blowing the seventh trumpet (message announcing the reign of God and His Christ).

Rev. 15:1, 6-8—The seventh angel with the seventh plague (judgment Truths).

Rev. 17:1—One of the seven angels showing John (the church class) the judgment of the great harlot.

Rev. 18:1-3—An angel announcing the fall and desolation of mystic Babylon.

Rev. 19:9, 10—An angelic voice announcing “the marriage of the Lamb” and the blessed state of those

invited to the marriage supper; the angel is identified as a “fellow servant, ... of thy brethren,” and disclaims worship.

Rev. 21:9, 10, 24-27—One of the seven angels showing John the holy Jerusalem (Millennial Kingdom) descending out of heaven (to bless the nations of earth).

All of these Scriptures mention angels (messengers) who might be taken to represent Pastor Russell in various capacities explaining the Scriptures and influencing the Christian world in his dissemination of these Truths.

Humble Self-Appraisal

To many Bible Students the depiction of Pastor Russell’s role in various Scriptures seems plausible indeed. However, as we have noted, only reluctantly would the Pastor be willing to admit any such portrayal, and then usually only in private. His strong reason for taking this position is evident in these remarks:

“Let us ... be thankful to God he has used various agencies in helping us, and in helping others, and in bringing forward his great cause; but let us not go into anything that would be at all like man-worship, for I am sure that would be displeasing to the Lord and injurious to ourselves.

“I remind you again of the Scripture in Revelation where the Church is pictured [Rev. 19:10] ... John, the revelator, who was seeing these things, fell down to worship the angel who showed them to him, and the angel said, ‘See thou do it not; worship God; I am thy fellow-servant.’

“And so, dear friends, if our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Lord have used Brother Russell in any measure, he is very glad and very thankful to be used. And if the Lord is pleased to use him any more, he will be glad to be used down to the last breath, but he does not want any worship, he does not want any undue adoration, he does not want any praise.”¹¹

Endnotes: Chapter 10

1. *Tenth Souvenir Convention Report*, International Bible Students, 1910 (hereafter cited as *Tenth Souvenir Report*), p. 206.
2. *Tenth Souvenir Report*, p. 238.
3. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “That Servant,” Mar. 1, 1896, p. 1946.
4. *Reprints*, “Watchfulness,” Apr. 1, 1895, p. 1797.
5. *Reprints*, “That Servant,” Mar. 1, 1896, p. 1946.
6. See Charles F. Redeker, *The Seven Churches of Revelation*, for additional details.
7. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, “Angel,” Vol. 1, p. 55.
8. This section is based in part upon Robert Gray’s unpublished article, “Scriptural Applications to Pastor Charles Taze Russell.” Also consulted was *The Finished Mystery*, section on “The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel” by George H. Fisher, pp. 417-420.
9. *Reprints*, “Addresses at Afternoon Service: Pastor Russell’s Last Days, by Menta Sturgeon,” Dec. 1, 1916, pp. 6004-6005.
10. This section is based largely on Robert Gray’s article, “Scriptural Applications to Pastor Charles Taze Russell.”
11. *Tenth Souvenir Report*, p. 238.

PART FIVE:

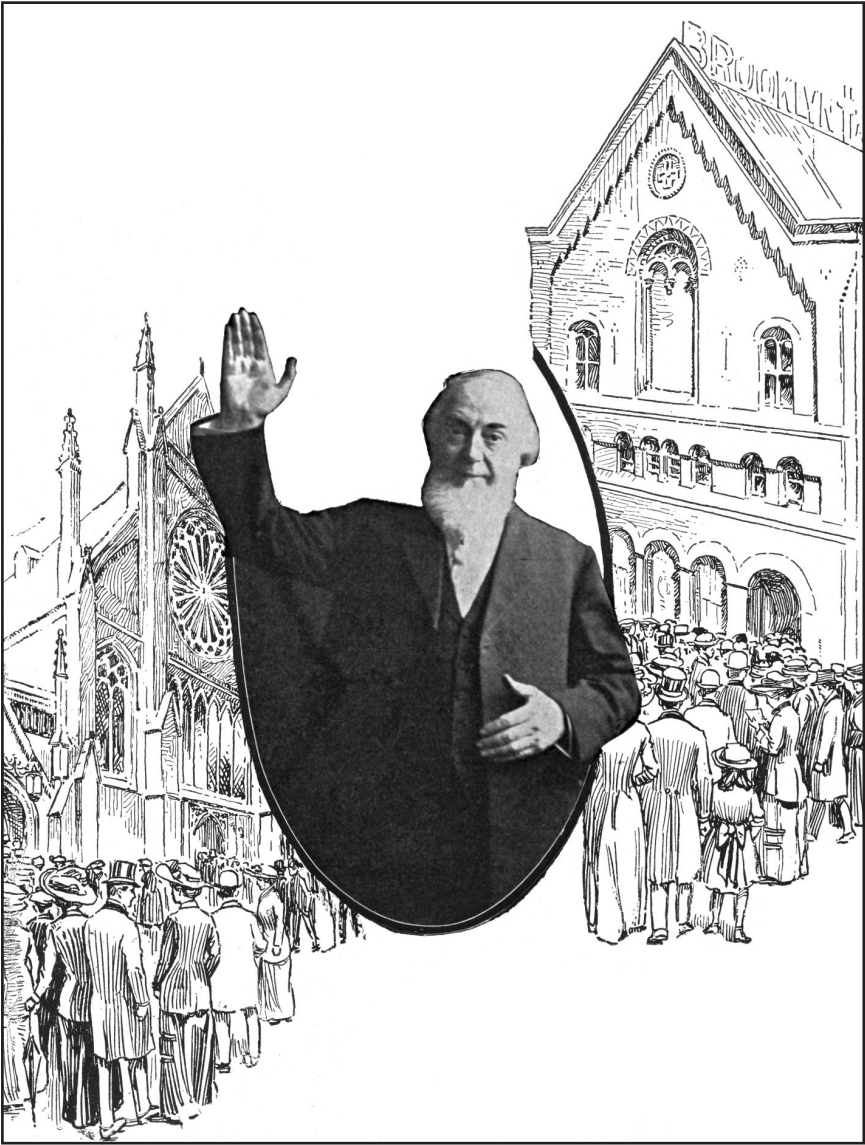
PROVIDING AN ENDURING LEGACY

“There is yet a vision for the appointed time,
And it speaketh of the end
And it will not deceive;
Though it [seem to] tarry, wait for it,
Because it will surely come,
It will not delay.”

—Habakkuk 2:3 (composite translation)

“Preach the word;
Be instant in season, out of season;
Reprove, rebuke, exhort
With all longsuffering and doctrine.”

—2 Timothy 4:2



The Pastor and the Brooklyn and London Tabernacles

Leaving the Watchtower organization because of its radical changes after the death of the Pastor, the Bible Students regrouped and throughout the world continue to uphold the Pastor's vision of the Kingdom for the blessing of all mankind.

11

Upholding the Pastor's Vision

FOR REASONS now made clear, in the period following the death of Pastor Russell there was much consternation and confusion amongst the Bible Students. It was becoming increasingly evident that the new administration of the Society was embarking upon a path deviant from that of its founder and dealing harshly with those wishing to preserve his beliefs and his kindly, democratic style of leadership. Already by 1917, through clever legal maneuvering and other means, many of the earlier prominent brethren under the Pastor who had taken a stand against the policies of the new President were being pressured to leave. Before long they, as well as thousands of other Bible Students who remained loyal to the Pastor's teachings, did just that.

As mentioned previously, these deposed leaders and their supporters cooperated in an effort to inform the membership at large of what was transpiring at the headquarters of the Society. This took the form of a twenty-four-page, single-issue journal published in September 1917, entitled "Light After Darkness," and a follow-up sixteen-page paper entitled "Facts For Shareholders of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society," dated November 1917. These

efforts contributed to several thousands of consecrated brethren withdrawing from the Society and forming independent Bible study classes in many cities in the United States and Europe. This also generated sufficient interest for continued communication and a desire for gathering together for further discussion of the issues.¹

At that point, there were perhaps thirty to forty thousand Bible Students remaining with the Watch Tower. There were also almost ten thousand who had separated themselves and were considering their options.² High on their agenda would be the possibility of forming a new organization to serve as the connecting link to independent Bible Student congregations and other believers. Not a few brethren, however, after the disheartening experience with the Society, would have a strong inclination to remain separate and unattached from any human organization for years to come. Yet probably a majority of the dispossessed group felt it desirable to continue in close ties and fellowship with like-minded brethren, to maintain the teachings and practices that had brought them such spiritual joy and satisfaction under the ministry of Pastor Russell.

Scattered Believers Regroup

Among those desiring to reorganize, there were strong personalities and divided opinions about how best to proceed, resulting finally in the spawning of several different movements. Three of the largest groups trace their formal beginnings back to the year 1918: the Pastoral Bible Institute, the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement and the Stand Fast Bible Students Association.

PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE (PBI). This group came about as a result of three major gatherings, all held in 1918: an informal meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in January; a convention under the auspices of "Associated Bible Students" in Asbury Park, New Jersey in July, attended by about three hundred brethren; and a third gathering in Providence, Rhode Island in November of that year. A committee was formed which, with some fifty colleagues and supporters, authorized creation of a non-profit organization similar in form to the original Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. It was hoped thereby to emulate the spirit and influence of Pastor Russell's ministry and render a pastoral service of providing spiritual nourishment and care to the scattered sheep. A new periodical was issued,

entitled *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*, with an editorial committee of five including R.E. Streeter as editor.³

The first issue of this journal was dated December 1, 1918. Its opening article, which set forth the aims and objectives of the publication, read in part:

“We trust never to lose the sacred and hallowed memories of that faithful example and ministry [of Pastor Russell]; that we shall always remember with heartfelt appreciation his devotion and loyalty to the Word of God, together with his peerless defense of the sacred Truths of that Word ...

“This Journal stands firmly in defense of the ideals, principles, and teachings of this servant of the Lord, not because we believe he was infallible, nor because of any blind superstitious reverence for him as a man, but because we have proven those ideals, principles and teachings to be well grounded upon the only sure foundation—the infallible Word of God.”⁴

Through the years, *The Herald* produced stimulating articles on a whole range of Bible subjects, to build and maintain faith in the Divine Plan as promulgated by the Pastor. While some leeway was permitted in the spirit of intellectual freedom, the basic core of fundamentals of the Truth was preserved. The articles were generally identified as to editorial authorship and outside writers were occasionally quoted as well.

In organization, the PBI has maintained independence from other groups and a loose affiliation with autonomous local Bible Student ecclesias. These are located mostly in the United States in the Northeast and Midwest. For many years pilgrims and speakers were made available to these classes, but this function has now been discontinued. Announcements of various class conventions are carried in *The Herald*. Pastor Russell's *Divine Plan of the Ages* was republished and made available, as well as many newly written booklets on various doctrinal topics. Throughout its history, the PBI has held up a high standard of righteousness for the saints and it has been noted that the brethren associated with it “specialized along the lines of faith, prayer, and personal holiness.”⁵

Nevertheless, some criticism of the group was raised by strict followers of Pastor Russell, primarily along two lines: First, they perceived a tendency to overemphasize “Christian liberty” at the expense of maintaining “purity of doctrine,” especially in areas such as the *parousia* of Christ, the six-thousand-year chronology, the church’s share in the Sin Offering, and properly differentiating God’s major Covenants. They also cited the group’s willingness to sponsor and maintain close fellowship with pilgrims and classes that were not considered sound in these doctrinal areas. Already in 1936 a conservative faction separated from the PBI over such issues and in the following year began publishing its own journal, *Watchers of the Morning*, with Isaac F. Hoskins as editor.⁶

A second criticism concerned what appeared to be an unwillingness on the part of the management of the PBI to engage in a wide-scale public witness for the Truth. A spirit of laxity seemed to be developing that encouraged the brethren to simply “tarry” and wait for the Lord to “call them home,” rather than boldly to proclaim the Kingdom message far and near. Such inactivity seemed out of place especially in the “Harvest” time of the age, which was expected to climax Jesus’ instructions to “go and tell” and carry the Gospel “into all the world.”⁷

These concerns were largely allayed in later years when a change of personnel in the managing board of the PBI and the editorial staff of its journal resulted in a return to a more conservative doctrinal position and a more active interest in public witnessing. The format of *The Herald* has also significantly changed, so that currently the issues are built largely around a central theme of Scripture, such as “Miracles in John,” “The Tabernacle in the Wilderness” and “The Roles of Jesus.”

LAYMEN’S HOME MISSIONARY MOVEMENT (LHMM). This was the second group to organize in 1918. It was led by Paul S. L. Johnson, who had been closely associated with Pastor Russell as a capable “pilgrim” or traveling preacher.⁸ Bro. Johnson and his supporters were convinced that God had selected him to become the new leader of the movement, but when his claims were not respected by the Society or even by the other Bible Students, a new

organization, headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was set up.⁹

Bro. Johnson began a new journal, entitled *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany*, with the first issue dated December 9, 1918, and it soon appeared on a monthly basis. As publisher and sole editor, he explained in an early article why the periodical was needed:

“Certain scribes and teachers, given as they are to genuinely ‘fanciful interpretations, wild speculations’ and manifest vagaries occupy one extreme; *i.e.*, that which has produced a most regrettable frenzy of delusion and an evil spirit among their followers [his description of the Watch Tower Society]. Other scribes and teachers occupy the opposite extreme; *i.e.*, that which has refused to recognize any advancing light and has persecuted and misrepresented the Truth that has become due, and thus has produced an underfeeding of the Lord’s people [his description of the newly formed PBI] ...

“Amid the two sets of conditions created by these two extremes, both as a protest against them, and as an attempt to avoid their evil effects and to give the brethren what has been proven to be ‘meat in due season,’ *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany* has by Divine Providence, we believe, appeared.”¹⁰

From the start, Bro. Johnson claimed the status of God’s special servant in the church for the “Epiphania” period to carry forward the work of the Pastor. Both the Watch Tower Society and all other groups that opposed Bro. Johnson were termed revolutionists; all such had to be steadfastly resisted in order to maintain the purity of teaching and other arrangements of the Lord. Much of his teaching consisted in showing how the various revolutionist groups were typed in Old Testament Scripture and in vigorously “exposing” their errors of doctrine and practice.¹¹

The LHMM regarded Pastor Russell as the “Parousia messenger” announcing Christ’s Presence, and Bro. Johnson as the “Epiphany messenger” who was to bring further word of Christ’s

appearance and the activities of God's people. They considered both the Pastor and Bro. Johnson as God's spokesmen during their respective periods. And they, too, desired to maintain the integrity of the Pastor's teachings and continued to publish his works.¹²

At the same time, they also believed that the Lord was pleased to reveal "many wonderful corroborations of the Truth given through Bro. Russell, plus many clarifications of the Truth as it has advanced since 1916."¹³ Bro. Johnson proved to be another prolific writer and in the course of his ministry produced seventeen volumes of *Epiphany Studies in the Scriptures*, fifteen of which were published during his lifetime. He specialized in finding Bible types (or pictures) that to him portrayed not only the other Bible Student groups, but also his own special role, the denominational churches, and current happenings in the world. But this very practice of consuming much time and effort in identifying such types and explaining their meaning was frowned upon as "speculation" by most other groups (but not the Stand Fasters, as we shall see later). Most felt that such was a denial of Pastor Russell's sound advice to the effect that "types should be used only to corroborate teachings already plainly taught in the Scriptures, and not as foundations on which to build new teachings or theories."¹⁴

Another main difference of the Laymen's movement with the PBI and other Bible Student fellowships, as emphasized by its founder, concerned the date for the ending of "the High Calling" of God. While most of the other groups believed the door to spirit begettal and the heavenly calling remained open, the LHMM taught that the door had closed officially in the year 1916. As one historian expressed it, "In essence, the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement closed the inner circle, but allowed new members."¹⁵

At first these new members were called "Youthful Worthies" who were eligible for "the better resurrection" similar to that of "Ancient Worthies" to life on earth. (Heb. 11:35) Later, Raymond G. Jolly, Johnson's successor, who was fondly called the "Epiphany scribe," taught that the Great Company (a secondary heavenly class) had also been completed and that by October 1954 all the Youthful Worthies had been gathered as well. Henceforth those consecrating their lives to God would become "Consecrated

Epiphany Campers,” some of whom would live to see the Kingdom established on earth.¹⁶

The teaching that the High Calling had ended would prove to be a strong point of contention for years to come. A later issue of their journal would list some eighty reasons why it was believed that the door had closed (the “reaping” ending in October 1914, the “gleaning” ending in April 1916).¹⁷ Any who disagreed with this (or other matters) were considered unenlightened and severely reproved for lack of discernment. Even subsequent leaders of the LHMM who succeeded Bro. Johnson after his death could no longer seek after the High Calling. Bro. Jolly, who took the reins from 1950 until his death in 1979, believed that he was of the “Great Company,” having the lesser heavenly hope. After his death, it was understood that no more of the spirit begotten remained in the flesh.¹⁸

Bro. Johnson’s leadership claims, the teaching on the closed door, and his elaborate emphasis on Bible types have all been unacceptable to most other Bible Student groups, preventing for the most part a close relationship and cooperation with the LHMM. This has resulted in entirely separate efforts to spread the good tidings of the Kingdom at home and abroad. The LHMM has continued to be active through the years, sponsoring meetings and conventions in the United States and many other lands including Canada, Poland, France, Ukraine, Russia, India, the Caribbean, and Africa. It also publishes and makes available a whole range of books, pamphlets, charts and tracts on various Truth subjects.

After Bro. Johnson’s death in 1950 and the ascendancy of Bro. Jolly as his successor, two breakaway groups were formed: the Laodicean Home Missionary Movement, under John W. Krewson, headquartered in Levittown, Pennsylvania (now ceased in operation); and the Epiphany Bible Students Association, under John J. Hoefle, centered in Mt. Dora, Florida. Since these exhibited relatively minor doctrinal differences from the parent group, the falling out has been looked upon by some as merely an “intra-family feud.”¹⁹

STAND FAST BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. This was the third major breakaway group to organize in 1918. It had its inception in the Northwestern part of the United States and Western Canada and remained mostly confined to that area. These were close followers of Pastor Russell who exhibited strong loyalty to his teachings and to what they considered his principles of Truth. They could no longer remain part of the Society, which had seen fit to embark on a course that deviated in spirit and in policy. A committee of seven elders of various classes on the Pacific Coast was appointed and a loose organization begun. A little paper entitled “Old Corn Gems” was issued, and several elders were sent out as pilgrims to encourage the brethren to “stand fast” in their beliefs.²⁰

The “Stand Fasters” fully accepted the so-called Seventh Volume (*The Finished Mystery*) as the posthumous work of the Pastor and stood fast in its support even after the Society eventually repudiated it. In the spirit of the book, the new group issued stern rebukes against leaders in the political and religious world and warnings of impending judgment. Another strong concern was that the Society had compromised its original opposition to the war effort, evidently hoping to allay mounting criticism and belligerence towards it. For conscience sake, the Stand Fasters deemed it wrong to bear arms, support the military in any way, or even to purchase war bonds.²¹

As a group, the Stand Fasters were all in agreement that the year 1918 saw the end of the “Gospel Age” and “Harvest” periods and that all of the faithful wheat class had been reaped. Consequently, it was believed that the door to the High Calling was closed and that the preaching work had ended. All that remained, therefore, was to use their time and energies in watching for the world’s final developments, in privately studying the Bible and their literature, and in discussing the faults of other groups of brethren.²²

Such association, instead of developing Christ-likeness and preparation for the Kingdom, led to endless divisions and subdivisions as more and more time was spent in bickering, speculative interpretations and doctrinal faultfinding. Without a valid purpose for its existence, such as showing forth God’s praises to others, the movement foundered and was destined to gradual disintegration.²³

An exception for a time was one of the Stand Fast splinter groups known as “the Elijah Voice Society,” which in 1922 began a public proclamation of the Truth directed especially to “Babylon,” in the sense of “executing the judgments written.” “Rebukes” were mailed to political and religious leaders, and “fiery” tracts were distributed around the churches of Christendom. Even other Bible Student groups were targeted for their shortcomings and sternly reproved. But as time marched grandly onward, none of the prophetic events expected in the early and mid-1920s materialized, and interest in the movement gradually waned.²⁴

An interesting sidelight to this sketch of the Stand Fasters is that one of its factions attempted to live and work together in a communal arrangement, with about three hundred members pooling their resources. The experiment began in a commodious, three-story apartment building in Western Canada, with high hopes as various of the brethren labored together industriously at different occupations. They continued their Bible studies and meetings, but soon came to the conviction that they were no longer running for the High Calling and adjudged most of themselves to be of an earthly class called the “Modern Worthies.” Shortly the colony moved to another site, hoping to settle in a forest-covered tract of government land, but the entire effort failed before much could be accomplished. Some concluded that it lacked the Lord’s blessing because attention had turned from heavenly to earthly things.²⁵

Later Groups Organize

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. Through the years, other separations from the Society occurred and resulted in new Bible Student groups becoming organized as independent bodies, but most were inconsequential. A notable exception was the Dawn Bible Students Association, which was destined to become the largest of all the breakaway groups. It started out as a radio ministry in the early 1930s and soon expanded into a broad-based service organization supplying literature to interested individuals and congregations and publishing a popular monthly magazine called *The Dawn*. Despite its late start, before long its work and influence surpassed that of the three previously described groups which had begun back in 1918. Let us see how this came about.

In the late 1920s as a member of the Watch Tower Society headquarters staff, W. Norman Woodworth had been asked to assist in using the new medium of radio to communicate the Truth to the public. When radio was yet in its infancy, he conceived of a program called “Frank and Ernest” based on a question-and-answer format. An “earnest” seeker after Truth would ask questions about the Bible, and a mature, knowledgeable Bible scholar would provide “frank” answers. The broadcast was well received, but Bro. Woodworth was dismissed from his duties when found to have fellowshipped with an independent group of Bible Students in Brooklyn, New York.²⁶

Thereafter Bro. Woodworth was able to spark interest among these independent brethren in continuing the work, as they recognized the importance of radio as a powerful new tool to present the Kingdom message. Under the auspices of the Brooklyn, New York Congregation of Associated Bible Students, a series of thirteen weekly programs was begun on Radio Station WOR in New York City, using the same format of “Frank and Ernest.” The first broadcast in April 1931 drew over two hundred responses, and a new era had begun.²⁷

A few transcribed programs were used elsewhere in the United States, but due to lack of funds in the Depression period, the radio work ceased for a time. A written dialog of the broadcasts, called “Radio Echo,” had been issued to interested listeners and was so well received that it was continued even after the broadcasts were suspended. In 1932, it was enlarged and made into a monthly publication with a new name—*The Dawn*. The first issue contained a reprint of Pastor Russell’s booklet on Hell; the second, *The Divine Plan of the Ages* complete, in magazine form. Through the years *The Dawn* enjoyed a steadily increasing circulation as a result of many scattered Bible Students and others responding to the broadcast. These were eager to receive a current journal outlining the basic Truths of the Divine Plan and assessing prophetic unfoldings.²⁸

The Dawn Bible Students Association (originally Dawn Publishers) was soon incorporated as a non-profit religious organization. After small start-ups in several locations in Brooklyn, New York, its principal office was moved in 1944 to East Rutherford,

New Jersey, where it continues to this day. The Dawn reprinted various of Pastor Russell's publications, including the entire *Scripture Studies* series, *Tabernacle Shadows*, *Daily Heavenly Manna* and *Hymns of Dawn*. Additional books, booklets and tracts were also published, which were harmonious with the Pastor's writings and especially designed for the newly interested. The first of the new booklets was entitled *God and Reason*, which has received a wide circulation through the years.²⁹

The first issue of *The Dawn* magazine printed at the new location in East Rutherford, New Jersey in February 1944 carried an informative article that laid out the highlights of the Association's governing principles and policies. First, it emphatically disavowed any claims to being an exclusive channel of Divine Truth and denied that the Lord recognized any group or individual as holding such a position. Further, all who believed in Christ as Saviour and gave evidence of full consecration to God were gladly regarded as fellow brethren seeking to serve the Lord.

Next followed a reaffirmation that the Dawn did not exercise or seek to gain a governing voice in any congregation of the Lord's people. Its function was only to offer assistance and cooperation in the work of the Lord to any ecclesia that felt such would be helpful in the interests of the Truth. "The Truth" was identified as "that marvelous presentation of the divine will and plan set forth in the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, and in the brief corroborative testimony ... as given in *Tabernacle Shadows*." These writings of the Pastor were singled out, "not because we hold to them as some hold to their 'creeds,' irrespective of what the Scriptures teach, but because we have proved them to be Scriptural and because we know of no better way to explain briefly where we stand doctrinally."

The article continued by saying, "We are sincerely endeavoring to avoid becoming specialists along some particular line of truth. We feel that all the truth is necessary for spiritual growth." This included feeding upon the simple fundamentals of the Word as well as the deeper Truths. In regard to the interpretation of Bible prophecies of world events yet future, the Dawn endeavored to avoid the pitfall of becoming "prophets" instead of being earnest "students of the prophecies." With the conviction that details of

prophecy cannot be understood until actually fulfilled, it further stated that “we refrain from guessing about things of which we have no certain knowledge.”

Finally the article reiterated the spirit that the Dawn had demonstrated through the years in abstaining from attacking individuals or groups with whom it did not agree: “We propose to continue presenting the doctrines of the divine plan as clearly and as forcibly as possible, allowing the truth itself to point out the wrong practices of others.”³⁰

A significant factor in the growth of the Dawn Bible Students Association was its commitment to a strong public witnessing effort. There seemed to be a general awakening among brethren who had separated from the Society to the concept of such witnessing in a more concerted way. The Dawn leadership in this direction coincided with the growing sentiment and served to encourage it further.

Many rallied to the cause and were willing to contribute funds for needed equipment and for airing the Frank and Ernest radio broadcasts, even during the dark days of the Depression and thereafter. One particularly touching letter came from a dear widow in the Middle West who promised to send an offering of twenty-five cents per week, perhaps the modern equivalent of the “widow’s mite.” Along with the newly interested that responded to the Truth message, many Bible classes were rejuvenated, and local and general conventions became the order of the day.³¹

A large annual Midwest convention was begun, sponsored jointly by the Chicago and Pittsburgh Bible Students. The first gathering was held in 1939 at Webster Lake, Indiana, and the following year at Miami Valley Chatauqua, Ohio, where it continued for three years. The next convention at Chatauqua in 1944 was called the Bible Students General Convention, and this subsequently was held at various sites: 1947 at Brooklyn, New York; 1948 at Chatauqua, Ohio; 1949 through 1952 at Bowling Green, Ohio; and 1953 and onward for many years at Bloomington, Indiana.³² Listings and programs for these gatherings, reservation forms and highlights of the meetings were carried in *The Dawn*, and many of the brethren were

stirred to the old-time enthusiasm for the Truth and its service that was so characteristic of Pastor Russell's day.

The Dawn magazine continued its role as the mainstay publication of the group, and by the close of the twentieth century some twelve thousand copies were being printed and distributed worldwide each month. It was also produced six times per year in several foreign languages: Spanish, Italian, Greek, Polish, French and German. In addition, about 250,000 booklets on various Bible topics were being printed each year.³³ It was also estimated that the number of pieces of printed literature produced and distributed through the Dawn facilities was approximately two million per year.³⁴

Despite many years of such zealous activity in spreading the Truth and the Lord's evident blessing upon the work, controversy was not to spare the Dawn organization. Beginning in the 1960s, it began to set forth a more liberal interpretation of certain chronological and prophetic matters that some brethren found unsettling. The new emphasis was that although the *parousia* had begun, all matters connected with the Millennium were yet future. These included the reign of Christ, the start of Restitution blessings, and the binding of Satan. The application of the Jubilee, some interpretations of the Tabernacle type, and other subjects also became points of contention, resulting in widespread discussion of the issues in publications and from convention platforms. A considerable number of brethren preferred what they felt were the traditional views that had been established under Pastor Russell's ministry and had generally prevailed thereafter. The disagreements led some congregations to divide and new Bible classes to organize, and spurred independent ecclesia-sponsored activities across the country.

DIVINE PLAN BIBLE STUDENTS. Some of the brethren who differed from the Dawn rallied together under the general name Divine Plan Bible Students, while others did not officially adopt this appellation. However, the term is frequently used in Bible Student circles to include all of the brethren who hold very closely to Pastor Russell's teachings in every detail and who prefer to meet primarily with others who are similarly minded. To encourage and serve these brethren, in 1970 a new major annual convention gathering was

begun at Fort Collins, Colorado, where it remained for five years. In later years, it was replaced by the annual Indiana-Ohio Bible Students convention in the Midwest.³⁵

The *Bible Students Newsletter*, an outgrowth of the Fort Collins Convention, was started in 1972 to highlight the various activities of these brethren, and especially their efforts in witnessing the Truth at home and abroad.³⁶ The Divine Plan Foundation was established in 1969. Its first effort was to assist in the Japanese work. Over the years it has been helping various classes in their Truth projects such as printing tracts and books, reprinting *Studies in the Scriptures*, funding of videos and aiding foreign brethren.³⁷ Additional activities of these brethren are covered in some of the sections later in this chapter.

FREE BIBLE STUDENTS. This is a general designation for several loosely affiliated groups that should also be mentioned, though these trace their origin back to the period of Pastor Russell's active ministry. In 1909, the Pastor's clarification of the subject of the Covenants caused quite a stir both in this country and in Australia, with a strong wave of dissenting voices developing. The controversy soon expanded to other doctrines as well, such as questioning whether the church had any role in the Sin Offering or as part of the Mediator for humanity during the Millennial Age. Also commonly rejected was the belief that the invisible *parousia* of Christ had already commenced, and the identification of the Pastor as "that wise and faithful servant" of Matthew 24:45-47.

Three prominent pilgrims were involved in the dissent and formed breakaway groups: M. L. McPhail in the Chicago area, A. E. Williamson in New York and E. C. Henninges in Australia. The American groups rallied under the name Christian Believers and in 1910 began holding annual conferences. For many years these were in Grove City, Pennsylvania where they continue to be held. Congregations are strongest in the Northeast and Midwest. A publications committee in Cicero, Illinois (later in Lombard, Illinois) published *The Kingdom Scribe* (now discontinued) and *The Berean News*.³⁸

Also to be included under the general designation Free Bible Students, but separately organized, are other groups. The Christian

Millennial Fellowship has its main office in Port Murray, New Jersey and a distribution center in Houston, Texas. It was formerly known as The New Creation Bible Students and had been centered in Hartford, Connecticut. A monthly magazine, *The New Creation*, was begun in 1939 by its editor, Gaetano Boccaccio, and continues today as a bimonthly publication. The group is also active overseas, especially in Italy and Africa.³⁹

The Western Bible Students Association is centered in Seattle, Washington, and has held annual conferences on the West Coast, for many years in Mission Springs, Santa Cruz, California. More recently the Western Christian Believers Fellowship was organized and holds annual conferences in Ontario, California. There are also other group gatherings in America and foreign lands, sponsored by local Bible study classes.

Utilizing the Air Waves

As the electronic marvels of the twentieth century unfolded, the radio, motion picture, tape recorder, slide projector, television and computer all found their place in various witnessing efforts. Let us begin by recounting how the miracle of radio broadcasting was put to effective use. In June 1940, the Dawn resumed airing the Kingdom message on radio stations in New York and Philadelphia. One of the first programs carried a lecture entitled “God’s Remedy for a World Gone Mad,” for which over a thousand requests for literature were received. Bible study classes across the country were eager to participate in the witness and soon formed radio committees to explore station availability. Many were also able to help in defraying costs. By April 1941, twenty-five stations were carrying the messages and yet more brethren became interested in cooperating in the effort.⁴⁰

In the Chicago area, local brethren aired a series of broadcasts which were advertised by door-to-door distribution of “kingdom cards” at the rate of three to four thousand a week. In a follow-up work, the brethren would call at the homes of those who had requested literature, to explore their interest and encourage further involvement. Hundreds of contacts were made in this way, thus once again bringing many of the brethren together in active service for proclaiming the Truth.⁴¹ In the decades to follow, similar

activities would take place around the country after special public efforts such as lectures, conventions or simply tract mailouts.

By 1943, the “Frank and Ernest” broadcasts in the United States were being carried by about seventy stations, with ten additional in the Polish language. In October 1949, the programs were aired for the first time on a national network, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), with 174 stations. A year later, it was the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS), involving over 350 stations, which represented the peak of the radio witness work. Network broadcasting continued for another decade, after which it was decided to resume contracting with individual stations. The radio efforts have continued through the years, representing a large portion of the Dawn’s budget for witnessing, though the number of key stations has been reduced. In 1999, these included thirty-five stations in the United States, fourteen in Canada, and ten around the world in Africa, the Caribbean, the Philippines, South America, Mexico and Central America.⁴² Currently somewhat fewer stations are carrying the broadcasts.

With the advent of television, brethren saw a new witness opportunity. In the late 1950s, the Chicago Bible Students took the lead and produced thirteen fifteen-minute programs in black and white, using a symposium format for the discussion of Bible Truths. Later they made a special half-hour film, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” pointing to the blessings of God’s Kingdom to be established on earth. Numerous stations were found that were willing to air it without charge around the Christmas and Easter seasons.⁴³

The Dawn Bible Students then entered the field and produced a series of fifteen-minute television programs in black and white, called “The Bible Answers.” By 1960, half-hour programs in black and white were being produced, and the next year some were made in color as well. By the end of 1961, thirty television stations were carrying some of the twenty-six programs available, all without charge. The next year, when forty programs became available, the Los Angeles Bible Students took on the task of coordinating the shipping of the films to forty different TV stations.⁴⁴

As responses from the television programs kept increasing, the value of the medium to the Truth work became evident. Soon, TV

responses became four times greater than those from radio. This encouraged the Dawn brethren to engage a professional agency in helping to place the TV programs with more stations, and by 1962 sixty-three TV stations were being utilized. (The same agency was used to help place Dawn films depicting various aspects of God's Plan in churches, schools, nursing homes and senior citizens' clubs.)⁴⁵

For a short period in 1970, Dawn expenditures for television witnessing exceeded that for radio. By 1974 one hundred programs had been produced, more than half in color. Almost unbelievably, during this period the value of free air time provided to the brethren by the various TV stations amounted to six thousand dollars per week, or over three hundred thousand dollars per year! However, as stations were able to find more and more commercial sponsors, the amount of free time available for religious and public programming began to dwindle. Soon only smaller cable stations would carry them without charge, and in the late 1970s, 270 such stations were airing the broadcasts. By the 1990s, free time was rarely available and the brethren had to pay for most televising efforts.⁴⁶

The 1990s saw the need for updating the films that had been produced some thirty years earlier. TV stations were now using video cassettes for broadcasting, so that all the programs on film had to be converted into the cassette format. Some of the older programs were also revised to make them more presentable. A few new films were added, but due to dramatic cost increases, only four of these were produced. There are currently a total of twenty-four programs (old, revised, and new) available for TV airing, and new stations and networks are periodically engaged. Concurrently, brethren across the country continue to contact local stations to obtain "public service free time" where such may be available.⁴⁷

Another active participant in the witness outreach of the Bible Students in recent years has been the Fort Worth Bible Students Ecclesia in Texas. This group began using radio to spread the Truth message in 1973, calling it "The Divine Plan" program, and shortly was broadcasting internationally over more than seventy stations. It soon expanded to television programming, which was found to be even more effective than radio. The Fort Worth brethren have

produced a large number of programs illustrating various aspects of God's Plan.

Starting in 1974, they aired weekly TV programs on a station with wide coverage reaching several states. Broadcasting on this station continued for about seven years, until the cost became prohibitive. A number of different cable networks across the United States and Canada were also utilized, which at their height reached about half a million actual viewers each month.⁴⁸

Follow-up Bible lessons to the broadcasts have been prepared on *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, with questions to be answered and returned by the respondents. Over the years, a number of listeners were motivated to make a full consecration to the Lord, and at least three have become elders in Bible Student congregations. Many others have become sympathetic to the Truth message and are rejoicing in the promise of Restitution blessings to come. These results have encouraged the brethren to continue their efforts, counting it a privilege to thus spread the Gospel despite the labors and financial costs entailed.⁴⁹

Other notable efforts to spread the Truth message by radio and TV have been undertaken both individually and by congregations. One such was by the Winnipeg Ecclesia in Canada, which in 1972 began working with a local cable station. Due to a new requirement that all programs be produced locally, the entire Bible class was encouraged to learn the mechanics of TV production, including the operating of all the studio equipment, as well as writing the scripts. Each week the brethren assembled at the studio and video taped a half-hour program, called "Studies in the Scriptures."

The brethren used a variety of formats that utilized up to three participants, interspersed with slides of Scriptures that were being discussed, along with photos. Remarkably, there was no charge for any of this work, including the use of the studio. Eventually ten stations in the Winnipeg area carried the program and the activity continued for twenty-three years until cutbacks at the station forced them to cease.⁵⁰

Republishing Efforts

As the years of the Harvest period continued to lengthen and most of the original Bible Student publications of the Pastor's day became worn and scarce, the need for a large-scale republishing effort became evident. Many old-timers and newcomers to the Truth alike longed for their own copies of the rich spiritual resources from the Pastor's hand, in addition to copies of the *Studies in the Scriptures* that had already become available. In 1965, the Chicago Ecclesia rose to the occasion by overseeing a reprinting of the popular *Bible Students Berean Manual* (Comment Book). The project proved such a blessing and assistance to the brethren that the next year the ecclesia approved the reprinting of the *Watch Tower Reprints* and other writings of the Pastor. A separate non-profit group called Bible Students Publications, Inc., was organized to begin this work.⁵¹

Back in 1919, the Watch Tower Society had republished much of the contents of the original *Watch Tower* magazines (1879-1919), forming a set of seven large bound books that came to be known simply as the *Reprints*. But in the 1920s when the new leadership of the Society began radically altering its teachings, the *Reprints* were no longer of value to them. The Pastoral Bible Institute obtained the remaining sets and made them available to the brethren at large, but its supply was soon exhausted.⁵²

In republishing the *Reprints*, the Chicago Class decided to print one thousand sets, in six books plus an index covering 1879 to 1916, and to increase the type size by ten per cent for ease in reading. The local brethren determined to do as much of the work themselves as possible, to avoid the high costs if produced commercially, including the printing and collating. Using their own funds, they purchased the necessary equipment, acquired the needed skills and started printing in a rental space in an old factory building. The printing was begun in 1966 and took about a year to complete. The collating operation was engaged in by twenty brethren working together each Saturday for two consecutive years in the basement and garage of one of their homes. It truly was a cooperative project and brought much satisfaction to the brethren, who felt privileged to engage in the effort.⁵³ By popular demand, the *Reprints* have had

to be reprinted five more times, including loose-leaf and twelve-volume editions, though these were all done on a commercial basis.

Soon, other of Pastor Russell's writings were also republished. The initial printings of the *Question Book*, the *Covenant Book*, the *Pastor's Sermons* and the *Overland Monthly* series were also carried out by Bible Students Publications, from 1967 to 1969. As the work expanded, the ecclesia established a Book Republishing Committee to oversee further production, and outside commercial printers were engaged. A heavy demand by brethren everywhere required the reprinting of some of the books several times.

A three-volume *Harvest Gleanings* project involved the obtaining of original materials from dozens of brethren throughout the country. However, the most difficult of the tasks in the republishing work was the preparation of the *Expanded Biblical Comments*. This was an entirely new reference series that cited the Pastor's comments on thousands of Bible texts and required fifteen years to complete. Again, it was a collective effort of scores of brethren throughout the country, carrying out the needed research and compilation. It was produced in three volumes starting in 1983: the first on the *Old Testament*, the second on the *Four Gospels*, and the final on *Acts thru Revelation*. These were later combined into one book on thin, substantial sheets with flexible cover, in a printing of two thousand copies.⁵⁴

Other Bible Student ecclesias have also played prominent roles in republishing efforts. In 1970, the Fort Worth Bible Students began printing all six of the Volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures* plus *Tabernacle Shadows* under one hard cover, totaling eight hundred pages. About fourteen thousand copies of this book have now been sold. The First Volume was printed in magazine editions of varying qualities, of which a recent printing was fifty thousand copies. In 2004, it was estimated that altogether more than 333,000 copies had been distributed.⁵⁵

The New Brunswick Bible Students, beginning in the 1970s, oversaw the republishing of individual sets of the Volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* and *Tabernacle Shadows*. This was done in a regular (green) set and a deluxe (brown) set. The regular edition was noted for its inclusion of footnotes dealing with the relevance of

the year 1914 and of what were believed to be the Pastor's latest changes throughout the text dealing with such subjects as "Mediator," "Covenants," and "Justification." Next the class undertook publishing of the *Six Volumes* and *Tabernacle Shadows* in Polish, Romanian and Russian, in translations that are compatible with the modern era.⁵⁶

The Portland Area Bible Students added its skills to the republishing efforts in 1976 by bringing together the cherished Edgar brothers' three main works into one book, *Great Pyramid Passages*, followed by other of their writings in the compilation, *Faith's Foundations*. Both books have had second printings. Another major undertaking was *Pilgrim Echoes*, a compilation of Bro. Benjamin H. Barton's writings and discourses, released in 1987. This was followed by printings of the study notes of Bro. Anton Frey on various Biblical themes including the Tabernacle, and most recently, two handbooks used by colporteurs in the Pastor's day, entitled *Thy Word is Truth*.⁵⁷

Audiovisual Projects

The invention of the tape recorder proved a boon to the Bible Students, both for individual use and for witnessing purposes. At every convention, it became routine to have a recording facility so that the discourses could be made permanent. In the 1980s, the video camera and video cassette recorder permitted the recordings to include both picture and sound. Today, there are literally thousands of such cassettes available for loan or purchase from Bible Student libraries and personal collections.

Already in the 1950s, the Dawn combined filmstrips with tape recorded lectures on various Bible topics. These met with limited success in smaller public meetings and were soon replaced with color motion picture films. Later advances in technology enabled more sophisticated presentations, including multi-image slide showings, to be made. Some of the larger ecclesias used these to good advantage.

"FOR THIS CAUSE." The first and perhaps most spectacular of the multi-image showings was "For This Cause," a very effective automated slide presentation produced by an elder of the Chicago

Bible Students Ecclesia. This combined scenes from the life of Christ with the understanding of the Divine Plan and future Kingdom blessings. After a year in the making, the first showing was on Palm Sunday in March 1978, with two standing-room-only audiences of about a thousand each. It was a thrill for the brethren to see so many of the public respond, and it became a foretaste of what was to follow.⁵⁸

It required teams of brethren to travel with the production as in ensuing years it was taken all across the United States with generally excellent results. In 1982, single-screen versions were made in English, French, German and Polish, and the German version was used as a public talk at the first International Convention of Bible Students in Kufstein, Austria, that same year. The Polish version has been widely used in Poland with thousands in attendance. One time it was even shown there in a Catholic Church, with the regular parishioners enthusiastically attending in force, to the surprise of the local priest!⁵⁹

The slide version of the production diminished in effectiveness as technology advanced. “For This Cause” was then made into a one-hour video version, used for public talks, placed in libraries, advertised seasonally especially at Christmas and Easter, and made available for general distribution. It is estimated that over five thousand videos have been placed in this manner. Videos are now available in Polish, Spanish, Ukrainian, Romanian, Tamil (India dialect), French and Russian, with the Spanish version used for showings in Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. It has been a heartwarming experience for all connected with the effort, and especially in seeing Truthseekers motivated to go on to full consecration to the Lord.⁶⁰

More recently, “For This Cause” was produced in yet another format, known to computer users as a VCD. This is a video that can be played on all computer CDs and on most DVD players. Also included on the same VCD is an illustrated edition of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, which may either be read on a computer screen or printed out. Eventually the text of the book will be available in more than thirty languages. By the summer of 2005, twelve thousand VCDs had been distributed by the Chicago Bible Students, mainly by Internet advertising.

THE GREAT PYRAMID. In 1978, the Columbus, Ohio Bible Students conceived the idea of creating a multi-image slide presentation depicting the Great Pyramid, much along the lines that had been done with “For This Cause.” Earlier that year, some brethren had gone to Egypt to photograph the efforts of a Japanese TV producer creating a documentary about the Great Pyramid, as well as to bring back additional valuable photos of the interior and exterior of the structure. Over a period of many months, a committee worked out the content of the program, which included original artwork, historic photos of the site and interviews of brethren with expertise in a knowledge of the Pyramid.⁶¹

Why go to such efforts to highlight the Great Pyramid? Because it was believed that its construction depicted in symbol God’s overall Salvation Plan as a witness or secondary evidence to the Bible teaching. In addition, the Pyramid illustrated marvels of science and mathematics that only recently were understood, yet had been locked into its design for thousands of years.

The premier showing in Toledo, Ohio drew an overflow crowd. The presentation was later improved using a new nine-projector system. With extensive advertising and promotion, the performance was then given at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow on the Ohio State University Campus, with eleven showings over five days. Favorable advance reviews in several newspapers helped to stir interest and in all, 4,300 people attended, of which 630 left their names for follow-up literature. Another multiple showing followed in Toledo, Ohio, with an average of a hundred people per performance and 2,300 in all. Thereupon it was taken on the road, sponsored by a number of Bible Student classes, with varying results. It has now also been converted to a video format, with over two thousand copies distributed as a result of magazine ads, library placement, public witness sales and cable TV.⁶²

Several valuable lessons were learned as a result of this experience. Perhaps the most important was the realization that “if presented professionally and enthusiastically,” the Truth message is still refreshing and of interest to large audiences. It is also advisable to state clearly in the advertising matter that the presentation is

designed to strengthen faith in the Bible and to highlight God's Plan of blessing for mankind.⁶³

"ISRAEL: APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY." Brethren of the New Brunswick Ecclesia for years had felt the need for a message of comfort to be given to the Jewish people, along much the same lines as had motivated the Pastor in the earlier days of the Bible Student movement. It was decided to produce a high-quality, multi-image audiovisual production concerning the place of Israel in the Plan of God—one that would be appealing to Jewish audiences. After several years in the making, "Israel: Appointment with Destiny" came into being.

What were taken as clear evidences of the Lord's overruling opened the way for showings of the program in synagogues across the country. The premiere showing took place in 1989 before a chapter of B'nai B'rith with two hundred fifty present, ending with a standing ovation. The message was received enthusiastically and the word spread quickly among top Jewish organizations and synagogues, especially in Reform and Conservative circles. All major Jewish population centers were eventually covered as the production was shown again and again, with as many as six hundred in attendance.⁶⁴

After two years of showings, the doors of Orthodox Jewish synagogues also seemed providentially to open. When the production was in process of conversion to video, many Jewish organizations in the United States and agencies of the Israeli government cooperated in supplying additional footage. The premiere showing in Jerusalem in 1992 drew over twelve hundred, with many requests for the video at the close. Through most unusual circumstances, a contact with the head of a Jewish distribution network for the Soviet Union led to making a Russian version of the video, which has been in demand in Eastern Europe, Russia and Israel itself.

The comfort work of "Israel: Appointment with Destiny" is an ongoing one in this country and abroad. As contacts in Eastern Europe opened and paved the way, showings were made in Hungary, Latvia and Moldova; then in Siberia and throughout Russia. Much of the work is being done through cooperating Jewish leaders and organizations, which are anxious to distribute the videos and

use them in schools, youth camps and adult programs. In Moldova alone, a thousand videos in Russian are being distributed by the Chief Rabbi, with five thousand requested for Russia.⁶⁵ And so the effort continues.

Most recently a new version of this video was produced for Christian audiences, entitled “Israel Fulfilling Bible Prophecy: God’s Peace Plan for the Middle East.” Preceded by newspaper advertising, letters to local churches, and posters in stores and shopping centers, very successful showings have been made in different parts of the United States. The larger than normal turnouts for these presentations give evidence of strong interest and support within the Christian community for the Biblical view of Israel’s reestablishment in the End Time. The video is being sponsored by various classes both as a separate witnessing effort and in conjunction with convention gatherings. It is also produced in DVD format to extend its usefulness for individuals and small groups.

Rediscovering Brethren Worldwide

As noted earlier, during the ministry of Pastor Russell the seeds of “Present Truth” were planted on various continents of the earth through personal visits, the dissemination of literature and through the newspaper sermons, especially in Europe, South Africa, Australia, Central America and the Far East. But after the Pastor’s death and particularly during the Second World War, contacts with many of these brethren were broken. Then, by leadings deemed providential, one by one various areas of the globe began to open up again so that, both by communication and visits, it was possible to locate, support and encourage these newly found brethren. In many instances, further investigation revealed opportunities for witnessing in these lands and preaching the “good news of the Kingdom” to eager and responsive hearts.

AFRICA. One of the earliest such efforts was in Africa, where it was felt there was a groundswell of interest in the Divine Plan and a sincere call for help to bring this knowledge to the people. In 1973, the Bible Students Committee for Africa was formed, to coordinate activities of individuals and ecclesias. In that year and the next, and again in 1978-1980, successive trips were undertaken to West Africa to assess the extent of the needs there and to help organize

Bible Student meetings, especially in Nigeria, and distribute study books and literature. Surprisingly, in these lands many of the natives have studied the Bible from childhood as a result of earlier church missionary activities and are able to make rapid headway in the Truth once the common errors of creedal theology are removed.⁶⁶

The year 1983 opened a new dimension to the work with the organization of the first national Bible Students Convention in Nigeria. This continued on an annual basis through 1990, with attendance ranging from fifty to seventy adults and forty to fifty young people. These annual conventions were supplemented by two or three weekend regional conventions each year, showing the genuine interest in growing in knowledge and the fruits and graces of the Spirit. By 1990, however, economic and political conditions had deteriorated to the point where the national conventions had to be limited to every other year, and this has been the practice ever since. There are now about ten organized ecclesias in Nigeria, with newer ones forming in neighboring Ghana, each with elected elders and deacons. Regular conventions have also begun in Ghana. Overall, there are about three hundred known brethren throughout Africa, including Kenya, Cameroon and Zimbabwe.⁶⁷

The Dawn has been sponsoring the Frank and Ernest radio broadcast in Africa for many years and receives a considerable number of responses. These are shared with American brethren who are in regular correspondence with Africans interested in the Truth. There is also an active work being carried out by the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement (LHMM). The progress the African brethren have made seems remarkable, in spite of the pagan background that permeates their culture, the extreme poverty of so many (unemployment running at forty per cent or more), and the influence of Islam which is practiced by forty-five per cent of the population.⁶⁸

JAPAN. In 1969 as a consequence of being sent on assignment to Japan by his employer, one of the brethren was reminded that, in the days of Pastor Russell, a large class with several elders had formed there. Would it be possible to locate some of those families at this late date? A series of thirteen radio scripts were prepared under the auspices of the Divine Plan Foundation and broadcast

nationally. Ads were placed in magazines and several public meetings were held. This resulted in the establishment of a small Bible class in Tokyo with regular meetings, the translation of some volumes of *Scripture Studies* into modern Japanese, and several who were drawn to the Lord in full consecration. Brethren from the United States have made periodic extended visits to serve the group there, and an annual convention was begun. While success in this Harvest field is not measured in numbers, the brethren have reported great blessings and satisfaction in following the Lord's leadings.⁶⁹

BEHIND IRON CURTAIN. Prior to 1990, little was known about the activities of the Truth people behind the Iron Curtain, or even if any had survived the hardships of war and occupation. A letter received by the Dawn from a sister in Romania⁷⁰ gave the first inkling, and soon news began to circulate that a large group of Bible Students existed there. Subsequent visits by American brethren revealed that it was indeed so, and that love of "Present Truth" still permeated the hearts of these believers.

In the early 1990s, it was discovered that there were also many brethren in Moldova, where Romanian is also one of the main languages. Whereas both of these lands suffered from severe economic stresses, the brethren displayed a fervency of zeal and loyalty to the Truth and a desire to learn of the welfare of fellow brethren around the world. Over the next decade, many American brethren made dozens of trips to visit, encourage and assist these believers. Translation of the Volumes in their language was begun, computers were provided to enable them to print Truth literature locally and arrangements were made for supplying humanitarian aid for the necessities of life—food, fuel and clothing—for those most in need.⁷¹

Perhaps the biggest surprise for the brethren was to learn of the existence of a thriving Bible Student ecclesia in the bleak frontiers of Siberia. This consists of the remains of Truth families who had lived in Russia under Stalin but were sentenced to hard labor and deported to the infamous Siberian work camps because of their Truth activities. The severe conditions there and the related hapless circumstances killed off all the men, leaving some twenty or so sisters to carry on alone in the Bible class. Besides the Bible, their study materials consist mainly of an old edition of the *Divine Plan*

of the Ages in Russian and a few hand-written copies of the *Daily Heavenly Manna* book. They long for more of the Volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* and other study helps, which are now in course of translation and printing and should be of great help to bring further maturity in doctrinal understanding. It seems remarkable how, by just their basic study materials and the stimulation of occasional visiting speakers, the Lord has been able to maintain their faith and sustain their hope in the realities of God's Plan of the Ages even in the midst of such trying and difficult circumstances.⁷²

Ukraine is home to about two hundred fifty Bible Students, including a branch of the "Epiphania" movement. They hold an annual convention in Lviv and are active in assisting the brethren in Siberia. The Ukrainian brethren in turn enjoy the assistance of the Winnipeg (Canada) ecclesia both by translations of the Six Volumes and in periodic pilgrim visits.⁷³

Activities in Other Countries

WESTERN EUROPE.⁷⁴ In earlier days the British Isles had a large number of Bible Students, but very few remain today. However, ecclesias in West Wickham and Chesham remain active. The larger movements in England (the "Midlands" brethren and "Maranatha") have a loose association with the Free Bible Students in America. They continue to publish the *Bible Study Monthly* and hold a number of conventions, the longest being the five-day High Leigh Conference. Some years ago the Bible Students Union established a retirement center in Southwest England at Milbourne Port. There is also a branch of the LHMM in England with an active Web site and an annual convention.

In Germany, the age factor has also taken a heavy toll on the Bible Students. In recent years there has been increasing joint activity between the brethren there and in France, as well as with the small class in Lausanne, Switzerland. Regular local conventions are held in Germany and France, and there is also a joint convention each year. Germany has a general convention on the Pentecost weekend. There is also an active "Epiphania" movement in France that, in years past, has been working with the Jews, both those indigenous to France and those in Israel. Both the Dawn and the LHMM

print French translations of their respective journals. *The Dawn* is also distributed in the German language.

In Italy there are large ecclesias in Firenze (Florence) and in Agrigento, Sicily. *The Dawn* is published in Italian for these brethren. There is also a group of Italian brethren whose views agree with those of the American Free Bible Students. In Greece, the Bible Students affiliated with the Dawn are but a small group, and a slightly larger number are associated with the Free Bible Students of America. They remain active in witnessing by advertising in the public media. A regular translation of *The Dawn* is produced in the Greek language.

POLAND. Outside of the United States of America, Poland is home to perhaps the largest contingent of those holding to the basic Truths taught by Pastor Russell. Numbering between two and three thousand, they associate themselves with one of three separate movements. “Wojny Badaczy,” or Free Bible Students, have the largest number of adherents. Although divided in their opinions, the majority of these hold to the historic views of the Bible Students similar to the Dawn, PBI and Divine Plan groupings elsewhere. (They are not connected with the Free Bible Students of America.) Two smaller groups, “Swit” and “Epiphania,” also highly respect the Pastor, though holding to the belief that the heavenly calling is all in the past.

There are seven magazines published on a regular basis in addition to a comprehensive Web page. One of the largest projects of the Polish brethren has been the compilation and printing of a thorough concordance of the Bible, combining the lexical features of *Strong's* Greek and Hebrew dictionaries with the translation usage features of *Englishman's Concordance*.

In addition to a number of local conventions, the Polish Bible Students have a general convention that draws more than fifteen hundred, an active week-long choir camp that combines singing with Bible study, and numerous youth camps. They have also hosted the International Convention of Bible Students since the year 2000.

SOUTH AMERICA. The largest group of Bible Students in South America is the LHMM ecclesia in Curitiba, Brazil. Together

with surrounding areas, they number between one hundred and two hundred. Other brethren also meet in Curitiba, as well as in Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul states.

Two active classes are growing through their witness work in the Buenos Aires, Argentina suburbs of Monte Gande and Barzitagi. Another active group is in the Colombian city of Medellin. There is also a class that meets regularly in Georgetown, Guyana. Isolated Bible Students in Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, and the Canary Islands (and Spain as well) keep in touch through the Internet and by receiving the Spanish translation of *The Dawn*.

A brother in Lima, Peru, owns his own radio station and airs the Dawn International Short Wave Radio program (“Eco Del Alba,” 0AZ-9A-300 kHz—1000 meters) about eight hours each day. This includes highlights from *The Dawn* magazine, “Frank and Ernest” in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian, readings from *The Divine Plan of the Ages* and other books and booklets, comments on Bible prophecy, and Christian hymns and prayer.⁷⁵

AUSTRALIA. Two groups of Bible Students, the Berean Bible Students and the New Covenant Fellowship, remain active in Australia. The first of these produces a bi-monthly magazine entitled *The Peoples’ Paper*. The two groups combined number between two and three hundred. The largest class is a Polish-language ecclesia of about sixty in Melbourne. One of the regular methods of public outreach in this country has been a semi-annual, full-color advertisement in the Australian edition of *Reader’s Digest*.

Another project of the Australian brethren has been the sponsorship of *Adam to Zion*, a rewrite of the *Photo-Drama of Creation* in simple, modern language for children and those newly interested in the Bible Student message. A CD ROM containing worksheets for each lesson has also been prepared. There are close ties between the Berean Bible Students of Australia and both the Dawn and the Pastoral Bible Institute.

CANADA. The Canadian brethren, about one hundred and fifty in number, are scattered across that entire country. The brethren there are about equally divided in their affiliation between the Dawn and Divine Plan movements, with a few on the West Coast who are closely allied in their beliefs with the Free Bible Students. The

larger ecclesias are in Vancouver, Vernon (B.C.), the Saskatoon-Prince Albert area, Yorktown (Saskatchewan), Winnipeg and Toronto. The Winnipeg ecclesia has been particularly active in producing television programs in both English and Ukrainian. They are also currently deeply involved in translation and other supporting work for the Bible Students in Russia and the Ukraine. Annual conventions are held in Vancouver, Vernon, Edmonton, Prince Albert and Winnipeg.

India Work Continues

Almost all of the brethren in India live in just three southern states and most of these are connected with the Bible Students Association of Southern India that was formed in 1919. Presently they include twenty-five ecclesias, the largest of which is in Coimbatore and has about two hundred fifty members. The Association publishes a monthly magazine in the Tamil language, the *Bible Student*, which contains many articles from *The Dawn*, and others as well.

American Bible Students have had a long history of contacts with their brethren in India. For over sixty years, the Northwest Committee for India (now restructured as Bible Students Friends of India) has been active, and in the 1960s the Dawn also began sponsoring American brethren to minister there. More recently, such visits have greatly increased, and additional assistance has been supplied by the Oakland County (Michigan) Bible Students and others. Collectively they have gained a first-hand appreciation of the unique situation and hardships prevailing in that land, one of which is the language barrier with over twenty different languages and two hundred dialects spoken.

Most of the classes in India elect only one elder, with an assistant elder and a class secretary. Together, these serve as a committee to arrange a schedule of meetings and decide which of the competent brethren will lead the class services. The meetings consist mainly of discourses, with almost no Bible or Volume studies. Many of the brethren have little of this world's goods, but are rejoicing in the riches of the heavenly treasures they are privileged to share and are grateful for the spiritual help extended to them. Much of the literature used in study and witnessing is supplied from

America and includes the Volumes of *Scripture Studies*, bound *Reprints*, various booklets and standard Bible study aids.⁷⁶

Today the population of India has risen to a staggering one billion, in a country about one-third the size of the United States. Recent reports tell of exciting indigenous witness activities taking place, mostly among the middle class and the well educated. Large turnouts are occurring in public meetings and in follow-up efforts, such as have not been seen for many years.

In 1995, opportunities opened up in Bombay, the largest city in the world; then in Bangalore, the fastest growing city in Southeast Asia. Modern advertising techniques including newspaper ads, wall posters and banners as well as extensive hand tracting are being used successfully in these efforts. A huge Chart of the Ages (eight by twenty feet) and an overhead projector to show diagrams and Scripture texts are also being employed to present the Truth in an appealing and understandable manner.⁷⁷

In March 2002, perhaps the largest Bible Student public witness ever to take place in India was held in Bangalore over a six-day period. From fifteen hundred on the first day, the numbers swelled to over three thousand on the last day, with a total of over twelve thousand enthusiastic attendees. The following is a condensed first-hand account of the event:

“Those who came were very special; the subjects on the pamphlets attracted them. There were no miraculous healings, no famous people, no musical performances, and yet, they came. They were so attentive, sitting continuously for over two hours each day. It was so beautiful to see all heads bent down to make a note once a Scripture was quoted. An average of 40 texts a day were read before them to prove what was said ...

“The great plan of God for the whole human race was proven from every angle possible and based on the Ransom sacrifice of our Lord ... The reaction of the people, who heard such wonderful truths for the first time in their lives, was almost indescribable! They were so happy to hear about the Resurrection for all, the glorious thousand-year reign of Christ and the

endless kingdom of peace and joy. The two salvations were unheard of before. They had never known about God's plan for the rest of the world.”⁷⁸

Thus in recent years over ten thousand of the public have heard the Truth on many subjects, thousands of these have attended year-long follow-up meetings, and more than a dozen classes have been formed with six hundred new members. However, the latest report by a visiting American brother is mixed with a note of sadness as it describes the current zealous activities there. Recently there has been a change in thinking in the leadership of this work among the Indian brethren that is de-emphasizing the ministry of Pastor Russell, the use of the Volumes, and belief in the invisible *parousia* and related time prophecies, as well as questioning other beliefs and practices basic to traditional Bible Student understandings. At this point, it is too early to know how these issues will be resolved or how they will affect the progress of the new classes.⁷⁹ These developments and possible outcomes are being watched with great interest and prayerful concern by brethren in India and around the world.

The Jerusalem Convention⁸⁰

This unique gathering of Bible Students was held April 20 through 25, 1993, with over three hundred brethren in attendance from nine different countries. Most came from the United States (173), Poland (46), France (31), Australia (23) and Germany (17). It was the first such convention in Jerusalem for contemporary Bible Students. Platform services were translated into four languages: English, French, Polish and German. More than sixty ecclesias were represented at this gathering, and some fifty-four elders participated in the program.

The focus of the convention was on Israel—the land of the Bible. This was evident in the discourses, which ranged from spiritual meanings of the geography of the land to the prophetic anticipation of Jerusalem as the future capital of the world. A panel discussed Israel as God's time clock of end-time events, and a symposium covered the life of Jesus. As a supplement to the regular program, five outside Jewish authorities spoke on special topics.

There were scheduled visits to historic sites, often with prayers, Bible readings and discussions, which proved to be sanctifying experiences. The brethren were given permission to hold a rare, private service at the Garden Tomb. There, a discourse on “The Sting of Death” and one on “The Resurrection” were given, and the choir sang “In the Garden” and “He Is Risen.” Time was allowed for the brethren to enter the tomb—to see, to reflect and to pray. The visit to this site was felt by many to be the highlight of the entire pilgrimage. Three brethren on the tour also took the opportunity to be immersed in the River Jordan, where John the Baptist ministered and our Lord was baptized.

The convention and the guided tour provided an opportunity for the brethren to gain many insights into Israel’s colorful existence in Old Testament times and in Jesus’ day. In addition it allowed them to measure the pulse of the new State of Israel—seeing first-hand what God has accomplished there since the regathering of His people from the Diaspora. A spiral-bound book was printed to feature the proceedings, including the discourses and other relevant material. Summing it all up were the words of one who attended: “[The Jerusalem Convention was] an original experience, unique—never to be forgotten.”

The International Convention

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.⁸¹ In the summer of 1980, a Chicago elder and his wife were hosting visiting brethren from England, Poland and Australia. During the evening’s fellowship it was mentioned, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if just once brethren from around the world could enjoy such an experience at an international gathering!” One of the guests from England quickly responded, “Why not?” With those words, the International Convention concept was born.

In the next few months a committee was selected to take the pulse of the European brethren. Members of the committee were chosen from England, France, Germany, Greece, Poland and the United States. The response was guardedly enthusiastic.

During the summer of 1981 a trip was made to Poland to inquire as to what would be needed to get the proper visas for such a

gathering. The brethren there felt that Austria would be the most likely country to grant such a visa. A brother in Austria was able to locate a suitable facility in Kufstein, and thus plans for the first International Convention were formalized. When the management of the facility in Kufstein heard that between one hundred and two hundred Poles were expected to attend who would not be able to afford the price of lodging, they located subsidized hotels to assist in housing them. Over one hundred of these came in two chartered buses.

The first gathering was thereby held in Kufstein in 1982, with about three hundred in attendance. This was the first time in modern history when brethren actually were able to meet together from over a dozen countries.

Translation was a major difficulty at this first convention and sometimes the translators between one language and a second had to speak loudly enough so that a listening translator could do a second translation. Despite the drawbacks of less than perfect planning, the convention was a deeply spiritual and emotional experience for all attending. At the close the brethren excitedly endorsed the idea of having such a gathering every two years. Instead of a hand-picked committee, each of the participating countries would choose their own national representative and committee. Also, the brethren from Poland volunteered to come up with better translation equipment and work on translation booths to provide for a quieter environment.

In 1984, the second convention was held in the nearby town of Obsteig, Austria, at a large sports hall in the Tyrolean Alps. The hotel provided free lodging for up to one hundred fifty Eastern Europeans in a curtained-off area behind the speakers' platform. Attendance topped four hundred. The 1986 convention was held in a resort hotel in Willingen, Germany. Again the management provided some free lodging. Translation was greatly improved and the auditorium was more conducive to a spiritual meeting. This was the first year that a brother from the Ukraine attended. There were about five hundred fifty in attendance.

Two years later the venue of the convention was moved to DeBron, Holland. A major problem arose a few weeks prior to the

convention when transit visas were denied to several hundred Polish brethren by the German government. Fortunately, an American brother was in Warsaw at the time and was able to intervene at the German consulate, and the visas were granted just days before the convention. In 1990, the convention returned to Willingen, with an ever-increasing attendance. Some two thousand brethren from Romania who had been out of contact with other brethren for over sixty years had regained a connection with other brethren, and a small contingent of seven attended.

Both the 1992 and 1994 conventions were held in a modern conference center in Poitiers, France. The brethren were greatly saddened when a sizeable group of Romanian brethren were turned back at the Austrian-German border in 1992 due to the failure of the bus company to meet Germany's transportation regulations. Attendance decreased dramatically to four hundred in 1994, and the decision was made to move the location to the East.

The following two gatherings were in Miskolc, Hungary, with over nine hundred attending, including large numbers from Romania and Poland. Once again the site was changed in the year 2000 to Poland, where it has since remained. The largest number have been able to attend there—just over a thousand in the first year, and somewhat less in succeeding years.

Twenty-five countries have been represented over the years at the gatherings. These include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, East Germany, West Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, Moldova, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russia (Siberia), Ukraine, and the United States. One of the side benefits has been the sprouting of regional conventions in Europe and an increased cooperation and fellowship of brethren from many countries. Nearly all who have been able to attend testify to a great blessing received from the experience.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS.⁸² When the first International Convention took place, there were deep concerns that the language barrier would be too high to permit any meaningful cross-national fellowship. Yet in short order these reservations were dispelled as the language difficulties were greatly minimized by innovative

procedures. These included a method of readily identifying the languages spoken by each person and a broadcast system that provided ready translation of the discourses and testimonies into various languages.

A color-coded badge worn by each attendee clearly identifies his or her native language. Blue designates English, yellow French, green Polish, pink Greek, brown German, and orange Romanian. Small, medium and large colored dots pasted on the badge indicate slight, moderate and fluent ability in another language, which encourages interaction with other brethren.

Low-power FM is used to beam simultaneous translations of the discourses to individual radio sets loaned to each attendee. This allows the brethren to sit anywhere in the hall, tuning in the language of choice on their personal sets. The five translated languages of the convention are English, French, German, Polish and Romanian.

All discourses are translated in advance to be absolutely sure the speaker's thoughts are correctly conveyed in another language. Side benefits from this are that the discourse titles can be shown on the program and all the discourses can be printed in book form. Eventually every country decided to publish such a book in their own language. Today the English compendium of discourses is made available to all the brethren including those who may never have the opportunity of traveling to the convention in Europe.

Although the International Convention does not subsidize anyone, a special fund was set up to assist brethren coming from impoverished countries. In 2002 there were eighty-nine brethren from Romania, Moldova and Siberia who had their room, meals and transportation paid by this fund; and ten from Lithuania had their room and meals paid. These individuals were all selected by their own countries, not by the fund.

In the mid-1990s, youth seminars for the fifteen-to-twenty-five age group were organized to precede or follow the convention. They lasted about a week and were held at the same venue as the convention. Beginning with the 2000 convention, a one-week choir camp was held for all ages preceding the convention. It consisted of singing and studying, and produced a program that was presented both

to the brethren and to the general public in the town where the convention was held. Sunday School activities for those up to the age of fifteen have been organized by the French and Polish during most International Conventions. Activities are typically in Polish, with limited translation into other languages.

Over the years certain adjustments have been made to accommodate the customs of participating countries. The Europeans have become used to the American fixation of staying on time at all costs. The Americans have bowed to the European desire to sing all the verses of a closing hymn no matter how late it may be. The translation of prayers was desired by some and viewed as inappropriate by others. The decision was made to translate them because those who objected could simply turn off their radio.

The International Convention seems the perfect place for North Americans who want to meet their European brethren but who are apprehensive about traveling to non-English-speaking countries. All the travel arrangements are carefully planned and there are rarely any problems. Also, brethren in many European countries want to meet and entertain English-speaking visitors. In 1996 and 1998 an optional trip was organized to visit brethren in Romania, and in 2000 to visit the brethren in Poland. All of this has served to enhance the appreciation of the brethren for one another and to strengthen their mutual bonds of love and fellowship in Christ.

ATTENDANCE ANALYSIS.⁸³ Analysis of the year 2000 and 2002 conventions shows the countries of origin and percentage attendance as follows: From the United States, Canada and Australia, 16 per cent; from Western Europe (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Austria), 14 per cent; from Eastern Europe (Poland, Ukraine, Romania and Moldova), 67 per cent; and from all other places, 3 per cent.

Summary and Reflections

In the aftermath of Pastor Russell's unexpected death and despite the mass confusion that prevailed, many of his followers realized that the Harvest of the age had not ended and that there was much work remaining to be done. Without the visible presence

of their charismatic leader, their efforts perhaps did not seem as dramatic as previously, and yet in the Lord's providence, various opportunities opened up to continue proclaiming the good tidings of the Kingdom as well as serving the household of faith. Unique methods of witnessing were utilized that were not possible in the Pastor's day and enabled the banner of Truth to be held high by a relatively small band of dedicated brethren. And so the work of "preach[ing] the Gospel to every creature," begun by the Master himself and enjoined upon his followers (Mark 16:15), continues unabated to this day.

Hence, it is evident that the Bible Students have caught "the heavenly vision" first seen by the Apostle Paul (Acts 26:19), and later revived by the Pastor in his strong emphasis on the Millennial hope for all mankind. The chief joy of these ardent and zealous believers continues to be heralding forth the Word of Life and message of comfort to all who will hear it—the two's or three's who are yet responding, and to all others as a witness that hopefully will not be forgotten. Motivational texts such as the following continue to spur them on in these efforts:

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." (Eccl. 11:6)

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4)

Endnotes: Chapter 11

1. *Watchers of the Morning*, “Watchman, What of the Night?—A Review of Events in the Truth Ministry Since 1916,” Jan. 1955 (hereafter cited as “Watchman”), pp. 6-7.
2. *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ’s Epiphany*, “What Does It All Mean?” (reprint from Mar. 1952 and Sept. 1925 articles), May-June 1987 (hereafter cited as “What Does It Mean?”), p. 36.
3. “Watchman,” p. 7.
4. “Watchman,” pp. 7-8.
5. *When Pastor Russell Died* (Dawn Bible Students Association booklet, by W. Norman Woodworth) (hereafter cited as *Pastor Died*), p. 17.
6. “Watchman,” pp. 8-9.
7. *Pastor Died*, p. 25.
8. The historian M. James Penton describes P.S.L. Johnson as an “able but eccentric” individual who “had been raised a Jew, was converted to Christianity, became a Lutheran pastor, and finally, a Bible Student.” He considered him “as perhaps Russell’s best educated and most studious associate.” (*Apocalypse Delayed*, pp. 40-41.)
9. “What Does It Mean?,” pp. 37, 40; J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, “Charles Taze Russell’s Bible Students,” Vol. I. (hereafter cited as Melton), pp. 487-488.
10. *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ’s Epiphany* (hereafter cited as *The Present Truth*), “Our Journal a Regular Monthly” (reprint of June 1919 article), Nov.-Dec. 1988, pp. 82, 84.
11. “What Does It Mean?,” pp. 37-42, 43-45, 47-48.
12. “What Does It Mean?,” p. 46.
13. “What Does It Mean?,” p. 42.
14. Printout from the *Bible Student Library* CD ROM available from Chicago Bible Students: “True History of the ‘Stand Fast’ Movement” (by August Swanson) (hereafter cited as “True History”), under subheading, “Truth Is Seldom Complex,” n. p. (Also published in Ted Smith’s “Discourse Service,” 1979-11-2, Item #533, and republished from *Bible Student News*, Summer edition, 1936.) See also C. T. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, pp. 173-174.
15. Melton, p. 488.

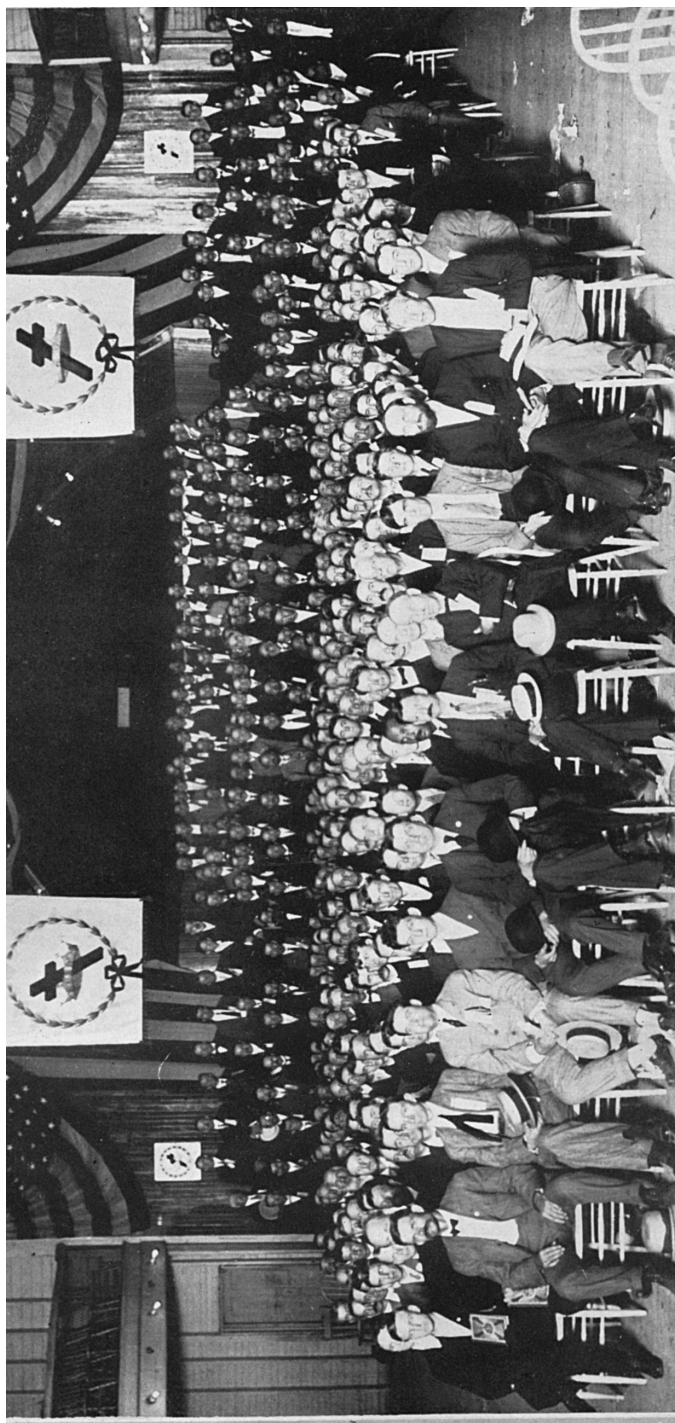
16. Melton, p. 488; *The Present Truth*, "The Quasi-Elect," and "Questions on the Consecrated Epiphany Campers," July-Aug. 1978, pp. 50-51, 62-64.
17. *The Present Truth*, "Is the High Calling Finally Ended?," Sept.-Oct. 1971, pp. 66-75.
18. Some details here and elsewhere in this section were provided by a knowledgeable individual who prefers to remain anonymous.
19. Melton, pp. 488-489.
20. "True History," under subheading, "The Movement Organized," n.p.
21. "True History," under subheading, "Origin of the 'Stand Fast' Movement," n.p.; M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (hereafter cited as Penton), p. 55.
22. "True History," under subheading, "Clearer Vision," n.p.; Penton, p. 350.
23. *Pastor Died*, pp. 14-15.
24. "True History," under subheadings, "The 'Elijah Voice' Movement," "Various Activities," "The Year 1925," and "Trials in 1926," n.p.
25. "True History," under subheadings, "An Experiment in Communism," and "Disillusionment and Disintegration," n. p.
26. *The Dawn*, "In Memoriam," Dec. 1975, p. 40; *The Dawn*, "Vineyard Echoes of the Past," by former editor (W. Norman Woodworth) (hereafter cited as "Vineyard Echoes"), Part VIII., Jan. 1976, pp. 40-42.
27. *The Dawn*, "A Silver Anniversary," by the editor (Leo Post), May 1999 (hereafter cited as "Anniversary"), p. 39; *The Dawn*, "Vineyard Echoes," Part IX., Feb. 1976, p. 54; Printout from the *Bible Student Library* CD ROM available from Chicago Bible Students: Chester Sundbom, "Short History of the Bible Students" (hereafter cited as "Short History"), under subheading, "Frank and Ernest," n. p.
Note: Norman Woodworth and John Dawson served as "Frank" and "Ernest," respectively, on the original radio broadcasts over Station WOR in New York City. Later, George Wilson became "Ernest" and Russell Pollock served as moderator.
28. *Pastor Died*, pp. 26-27; "Short History," under "Frank and Ernest," n. p.; *The Dawn*, "In Memoriam," Dec. 1975, p. 39; *The Dawn*, "Vineyard Echoes," Part IX., Feb. 1976, pp. 55-56.
29. *The Dawn*, "Anniversary," pp. 40-41; *The Dawn*, "Vineyard Echoes," Part IX., Feb. 1976, pp. 56, 58.

30. *The Dawn*, “Talking Things Over,” by the editor (W. Norman Woodworth), Feb. 1944, pp. 57-61.
31. *Pastor Died*, pp. 26-29; *The Dawn*, “Vineyard Echoes,” Part XIII., June 1976, pp. 52-53.
32. *Bible Students Newsletter, Special 25th Anniversary Edition, 1972-1997*, Vol. 27 (hereafter cited as *Newsletter Special*), “History of the Dayton Ecclesia,” p. 5.
33. *The Dawn*, “Anniversary,” pp. 42-43.
34. *The Dawn*, “Anniversary,” pp. 38, 41-42.
35. *Newsletter Special*, “A Regathering of Eagles,” by Larry Davis, p. 3.
36. *Newsletter Special*, “Gleanings from 25 Years of the *Newsletter*,” by the editor (Allen Springer), p. 39.
37. *Newsletter Special*, “The Divine Plan Foundation—A Short History,” by Edward Lorenz, p. 20.
38. Melton, pp. 486-487; and correspondence with David Karavas, 12/31/2002.
39. Correspondence with David Karavas, 12/31/2002 and with Elmer Weeks, Jan. 2004.
40. *The Dawn*, “A Voice from Heaven,” by the editor (Leo Post), June 1999 (hereafter cited as “Voice”), pp. 35-36.
41. *The Dawn*, “Voice,” pp. 36-37.
42. *The Dawn*, “Voice,” pp. 38-39.
43. *The Dawn*, “The Vision,” by the editor (Leo Post), July 1999 (hereafter cited as “Vision”), p. 46.
44. *The Dawn*, “Vision,” pp. 46-47.
Note: For many years Russell Pollock of the Los Angeles ecclesia was active in the TV ministry. Early in “The Bible Answers” series he served as announcer, with Ed Fay of the San Francisco ecclesia and Norman Woodworth of the Dawn as panel participants.
45. *The Dawn*, “Vision,” pp. 47-48.
46. *The Dawn*, “Vision,” pp. 48-49.
47. *The Dawn*, “Vision,” pp. 49-50.
48. *Newsletter Special*, “Harvest Truth on the Air: ‘The Divine Plan’ Program,” by George Wilmott, p. 14 (hereafter cited as “Truth on the Air”).
49. *Newsletter Special*, “Truth on the Air.”

50. *Newsletter Special*, "Studies in the Scriptures on TV, A Full Ecclesia Effort," by the Winnipeg Ecclesia, p. 15.
51. *Newsletter Special*, "Bible Students Publications, Inc.," by George Tabac, and "Chicago Bible Students Book Republishing Committee," by Art Jezuit, both on p. 11 (hereafter cited as "Publications and Republishing").
52. *Newsletter Special*, "The Reprinting of the Reprints," p. 10.
53. *Newsletter Special*, "'Because They Had a Will to Work ...'—Collating the Reprints," p. 10.
54. *Newsletter Special*, "Publications and Republishing"; correspondence with George Tabac, 9/30/2002 and 6/13/2003, and with Art Jezuit, 7/12/2003.
55. *Newsletter Special*, "Volumes Reprinted in New Form," by George Wilmott, p. 13; updated in correspondence with George Wilmott, 4/1/2004.
56. *Newsletter Special*, "Printing Committee Appointed at Fort Collins," by Kenneth Rawson, p. 12.
57. *Newsletter Special*, "Harvest-Related Works Reprinted," by Jerry Leslie, p. 13.
58. *Newsletter Special*, "For This Cause, Audiovisual Presentation," by George Tabac (hereafter cited as "For This Cause"), p. 16.
59. *Newsletter Special*, "For This Cause," pp. 16-17.
60. *Newsletter Special*, "For This Cause," p. 17.
61. *Newsletter Special*, "The Great Pyramid: Ancient Wonder, Modern Mystery, Audiovisual Presentation," by Richard Kindig (hereafter cited as "The Great Pyramid"), p. 17.
62. *Newsletter Special*, "The Great Pyramid," pp. 17, 19.
63. *Newsletter Special*, "The Great Pyramid," p. 19.
64. *Newsletter Special*, "Israel: Appointment with Destiny, Audiovisual Presentation," by Kenneth Rawson (hereafter cited as "Appointment with Destiny"), p. 18.
65. *Newsletter Special*, "Appointment with Destiny," pp. 18, 19; *Bible Students Newsletter* (hereafter cited as *Newsletter*), "Comforting Natural Israel in Eastern Europe," by Kenneth Rawson, Winter 1999, p. 9.
66. *Newsletter Special*, "Ministry Broadens in Africa," by Richard Evans (hereafter cited as "Ministry in Africa"), p. 24.

67. *Newsletter Special*, “Ministry in Africa,” pp. 24, 26; updated in correspondence with David Rice, 9/16/2003; and information supplied by Carl Hagensick, 5/3/2006.
68. *Newsletter Special*, “Ministry in Africa,” p. 26; and information supplied by Carl Hagensick, 5/3/2006.
69. *Newsletter Special*, “The Divine Plan Foundation—A Short History,” by Edward Lorenz, p. 20; “Ministry in Japan,” by Owen R. Kindig, p. 21.
Note: It was Robert Alexander of the Palo Alto, California ecclesia who in 1969 was motivated to renew efforts in spreading the Truth in Japan.
70. The sister was Elisabeta Precup, who subsequently visited the brethren in the United States. In personal conversation while in the Los Angeles area, she revealed that the Romanian brethren have expressed deep concern that the temptations faced by the American brethren—in terms of affluence and worldliness—were far greater trials than the hardships of life in Romania.
71. *Newsletter Special*, “East Meets West,” by Allen Springer, pp. 28, 29; “Our Spiritual Family in Romania and Moldova,” by Jerry Leslie, p. 29; and *Newsletter*, “The Truth Movement in Romania and Moldova: An Update,” by Allen Springer, Winter 2000, pp. 1, 5.
72. *Newsletter*, “Harvest Activities in Eastern Europe and Beyond,” by Jerry Leslie, Winter 1999, pp. 12, 13; and Special Report (late 1999), “Ministering to Spiritual and Natural Israel in Eastern Europe and Siberia,” by Kenneth Rawson, pp. 2-3.
73. Information supplied by Carl Hagensick, 5/3/2006.
74. This section on Western Europe, and the sections that follow on Poland, South America, Australia, and Canada, were written by Carl Hagensick.
75. For further details of this radio outreach from Peru, see *The Dawn*, “The Dawn International Radio Broadcast,” by Joseph Panucci, April 2006, pp. 57-60. Through the years he has made numerous pilgrim trips to both South and Central America, and submitted periodic reports that were published in *The Dawn*.
76. Condensed from *The Northwest Committee for India Newsletter*, articles by Ray Krupa, David Bruce, and Michael Brann, Spring 1993; *Newsletter Special*, “The Harvest Work in India,” by Ric Cunningham, p. 25; and “India Trip Report,” by Larry Davis, 1/4/2003.

77. *Newsletter*, "600 Attend Public Meeting Series in India," Report by D.S.P. Varma, Winter-Spring 1998-1999, pp. 1, 12.
78. *Newsletter*, "Six-Day Witness in India Draws 12,000," by D.S.P. Varma, Summer 2002, pp. 1, 11.
79. "India Trip Report," by Ric Cunningham, March 2005.
80. This section was based on the *Final Report of the Jerusalem Convention and Israel Tour*, written by Paul Mali, who also conceived and coordinated the event.
81. This section, slightly edited, was written by Carl Hagensick.
82. This section, slightly edited, was written by Michael Nekora.
Note: Both Bros. Hagensick and Nekora were closely identified with the International Convention from the start.
83. Calculated from a table prepared by Michael Nekora, summarizing convention attendance.



**The Pastor with a Group of Pilgrims, Elders and Deacons
at the Chautauqua Lake, New York Convention (1910)**
(Pastor Russell is in the center rear, near the front of the standing group.)
 As in the Pastor's day, Bible Student congregations are still served by elders
 and deacons, and hold frequent conventions for study and fellowship.

12

Contemporary Bible Student Ministries

WITH THE ominous unfolding of world events demonstrating that the Biblical End Times are a present reality, Bible Students are reaching out to spread the Gospel message in every way possible. Despite delays in expectations of the establishment of God's Kingdom, they are mindful of their founding Pastor's counsel to be grateful for the time remaining and to seize the moments in zealous activity in the Lord's vineyard. Earlier we noted how various recent inventions and technological advances were utilized to spread the Truth more effectively than ever before. This chapter, which focuses primarily on the work in the United States, will provide a yet broader perspective of the current ministries and activities of the Bible Students—all as part of the enduring legacy left by Pastor Russell.

Much of the work is being carried on at both the ecclesia level and by service organizations, independent publishing houses, foundations and committees as well as by individuals. Unlike most other church groups, there is no central body coordinating these efforts or exercising control over individual congregations.

Bible Student Numerical Distribution¹

Let us begin by providing an overall sketch of the number of Bible Students that are found throughout the world. How many are there today and where are they located? While firm statistics are not available, reasonable estimates are that there are approximately ten thousand to twelve thousand total in the world. This number seems surprisingly small for the activity that they generate. They are known to exist in at least fifty-three countries, spread across all of the five major continents. Of these, perhaps sixty to seventy per cent or more claim to be fully consecrated to the Lord and the remainder are close, interested friends of the movement and/or family members. Of this total, perhaps two thousand are of the “Free” Bible Student category, three thousand of the LHMM, and six thousand covering the Dawn, PBI and Divine Plan groupings.

By far, most Bible Students are found in just four areas of the world—the United States (3,000), Poland (2,500), Romania (2,500) and India (1,500); again, all of these numbers and those to follow are estimates only. The next sizeable groupings are found in France (300), Australia (250), Ukraine (250), England (200), Germany (200), Brazil (150), Canada (150), Nigeria (150), Ghana (100) and Moldova (100).

Next follow Argentina (50), Greece (50), Italy (50), Lithuania (40), Kenya (30), Jamaica (25), Cameroon (20), Siberia (20), Austria (15), Colombia (15), Finland (15), Israel (15) and Japan (15). Finally, a handful each (10 or less) are located in Denmark, Guyana (So. America), Holland, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

Overall, then, the Bible Students constitute a very small number in a world where the population now exceeds six billion. Those who are truly the Lord’s, members of the household of faith, may be likened to jewels sparkling in the darkness around them—holding forth the Word of Life.

Congregations

Congregations (or ecclesias) represent the basic organizational structure of the Bible Students and are patterned after the example of the early church. These are all autonomous and independent, elect their own leaders, conduct Bible studies and other services, maintain loose affiliation with similar groups in the fellowship, and carry on witnessing activities. Some can trace their beginnings back to Pastor Russell's day; many have sprung up subsequently.

In the United States, ecclesias are found scattered mostly in the Northeast and Midwest, some in the West, and a few in the South. Whereas the exact number of such bodies is not officially recorded, a reasonable estimate would be several hundred, which would include all the various groupings within the movement. Only the largest of these today would approach or exceed one hundred in membership, with most varying from a handful to fifty or less.

There are no collections or solicitations for funds at Bible Student meetings; class activities are supported by voluntary contributions. The ecclesias have no paid ministers. Brethren who are considered mature in the faith and capable as Bible teachers are ordained as elders by vote of the congregation. These normally prepare and deliver Bible discourses and preside over most of the class studies. They are assisted in this work by the deacons, also elected, who generally handle temporal matters such as setting up chairs and sound equipment for the meetings as needed.

The activity schedule for a typical ecclesia would find two or more meetings on Sunday and one or two during the week. Bible studies, Volume studies, discourses, or panel presentations would predominate on Sunday, with studies and prayer/testimony meetings more common during the week. Congregational singing of traditional hymns of the church and extemporaneous prayer are customary at the opening and closing of meetings. Participation on the part of all attendees is encouraged, resulting in active group discussion and a warm sense of fellowship and mutual edification in the faith. Most recently, a few classes are utilizing the Internet and going "on-line" with studies and other formats, thus extending meeting privileges to many who otherwise would be separated by many miles or are even in foreign lands.

Most congregations, whether large or small, are also engaged in spreading the Truth message in their own communities and geographical regions, using a variety of methods. Holding public meetings which are advertised by tracting and newspaper ads has long been a favorite. Some classes sponsor fair booths, which frequently are able to distribute large quantities of booklets and literature on various Bible topics. Some sponsor cable TV programs specially designed to interest and instruct the public, then send out follow-up literature. Another activity involves the writing and distribution of newsletters for the public, covering basic doctrinal areas and current world events in relation to Bible prophecy. Other classes mail consolation booklets with the Bible's message of hope to the bereaved. Still others have experimented with brief television messages or placing ads in national magazines.

In addition, a few classes (and individuals) are involved in providing a discourse tape service to brethren of the fellowship at large who may be isolated, shut in, or unable to attend conventions.

Some of the ecclesias most active in witnessing activities, republishing efforts and serving the brethren collectively are:²

- ◆ Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio
- ◆ Baltimore Area Bible Students (Maryland)
- ◆ Bible Students Church of Los Angeles (California)
- ◆ Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick (New Jersey)
- ◆ Chicago Bible Students Ecclesia (Illinois)
- ◆ Fort Worth Bible Students (Texas)
- ◆ Miami Valley Bible Students Ecclesia (Ohio)
- ◆ New Albany - Louisville Bible Students (Indiana)
- ◆ Oakland County Bible Students (Michigan)
- ◆ Orlando Bible Students (Florida)
- ◆ Portland Area Bible Students (Oregon)
- ◆ Wilmington Bible Students (Delaware)
- ◆ Winnipeg Bible Students (Canada).

Major Organizations

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION³

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

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Web site: www.dawnbible.com

The Dawn is the largest and most influential of the Bible Student organizations, with a central publishing house and associated ecclesias throughout the country. It is managed by a board of twelve trustees, elected each year by representative members in ecclesias across the United States, Canada and Great Britain. Branch offices are located in several foreign countries including Argentina, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Peru. It sponsors traveling lecturers who visit congregations and other groups upon request and maintains a tape recording and CD service, and video lending library.

From its inception in the early 1930s, the Dawn has published the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* and *Tabernacle Shadows*. Its monthly magazine, *The Dawn*, is published in six languages and contains informative articles on current events relating to Bible prophecy, on the Christian life and on doctrinal areas of interest to Bible students. It also carries listings of various regional conventions as requested by cooperating congregations and especially features the annual “General Convention,” a week-long event of discourses, Bible studies and testimony meetings. Each month twelve thousand copies of *The Dawn* are printed in English and distributed worldwide.

The Dawn magazine currently lists six additional books and thirty-six booklets that are available, plus a number of free tracts. Sample titles of these publications are listed on the next page.

Books

Behold Your King

The Book of Books

The Creator's Grand Design

Daily Heavenly Manna

The People of the Bible

Songs in the Night

Booklets

Archeology Proves the Bible

Armageddon, Then World Peace

The Blood of Atonement

The Day of Judgment

God's Plan for Man

Israel in History and Prophecy

The Kingdom of God

Four major witnessing approaches are now being utilized by the Dawn. These are the printed page, radio, television and a web site on the Internet. The printed page is the oldest and continues to be effective, with thousands of booklets distributed every month. The radio outreach began in the early days of the Dawn and continues to be well received. Television has also proven useful through the years, though programming has become more expensive. Responses from radio and TV are running about seven thousand per year. The Internet is being used to full advantage also. The web site already contains all of the Dawn literature, all of the "Frank and Ernest" radio programs and back issues of *The Dawn* magazine from 1997 onward. Work also is in progress to place all of the "Bible Answers" videos and recent General Convention videos on the web site as well.

With the availability of the computer, off-site help from various brethren has been a big boost, with some of the needed work being done in Orlando, Los Angeles, New Haven, Detroit, Chicago, San Luis Obispo and other locations. The prayers of the brethren continue to be solicited that by the Lord's grace the message of God's Holy Word may continue to be spread into all the world.

LAYMEN'S HOME MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

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The headquarters and publishing house of the LHMM has been located in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area since its inception in 1918. It publishes and circulates large quantities of Bible-based books, booklets, magazines and tracts in various languages. For years it has furnished both hardbound and economy copies of the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* by Pastor Russell, and all seventeen volumes of the *Epiphany Studies in the Scriptures* by its founder, Paul S. L. Johnson. It maintains a staff of speakers, pilgrims and evangelists and holds regular Bible study conventions in the United States and other countries.

The LHMM publishes two journals: *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany*, now a quarterly, is its foundational organ for advanced members. *The Bible Standard* (formerly *Herald of the Epiphany*) is a sister magazine, of more basic content for general readership, and is issued monthly.

Some sample titles of publications are:

Books

Daily Heavenly Manna

Life—Death—Hereafter

Photo-Drama of Creation

Poems of Dawn

Tabernacle Shadows

Booklets

Anglo-Israelism—A Modern Delusion

Born Again

The Gift of Tongues

The Hell of the Bible

Jewish Hopes and Prospects

Other Bible study materials offered are: Wall charts of the Divine Plan of the Ages, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the Great Pyramid of Egypt; motto cards with Scripture of the year; and back issues of *The Present Truth* and *The Bible Standard* magazines. A CD library for computer users, entitled "Bible Standard Cyclopedia," culminated a three-year effort and contains the group's mainstay publications and other study items.

PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

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Web site: www.heraldmag.org

Founded in 1918, the PBI has continuously published its journal, *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*, which today is an attractive bimonthly magazine with a circulation of about 2,400. The Institute is governed by a seven-member board of directors elected annually by its membership, and its journal is supervised by an editorial committee of five annually appointed by the directors. It has successfully weathered several changes in location of its main office as well as in the makeup of its board and editorial staff.

The PBI cooperates with associated Bible classes through the ministry of its journal. Magazine articles are for the upbuilding of the brethren in grace and knowledge, and are in basic harmony with Pastor Russell's teachings. *The Herald* also carries announcements of class conventions, an obituary list of recently deceased brethren and a section called "News and Views" that brings into focus prophetic signs of the times.

Some books and booklets distributed by the Institute are:

Books

Creation Triumphs over Evolution

The Doctrine of Christ

Illustrated First Volume

This Land is Mine

*What Everyone Should Know
About Being Saved*

Booklets

Israel and the Middle East

The Resurrection of the Dead

What Is the Soul?

Why Does God Permit Evil?

*What Say the Scriptures
About Hell?*

Other materials offered are: "Bible Student Library" (on three CD ROMs) for computer users, which includes virtually all of Pastor Russell's works, convenient Bible translations, Bible reference works and an extensive collection of articles and treatises by contemporary Bible Student authors. An audio cassette of hymns sung by Bro. John T. Read is also available.

Other Organizations

BIBLE STUDENTS PUBLICATIONS, INC.⁴

Bensenville, IL 60106

E-mail: Tabacs@comcast.net

Bible Students Publications is a non-profit organization that was originally formed in 1966 by several brethren after the Chicago Ecclesia had approved the republishing of Pastor Russell's writings. By pooling their resources, these individuals were able to purchase printing equipment, rent needed facilities and provide manpower to assist in this work.

The first project was the republishing of the *Watch Tower Reprints*, in which many brethren participated in its various phases, including filming, printing, folding, collating, binding and final distribution. This was followed by reprinting of other of the Pastor's writings—*What Pastor Russell Said* (Question Book) (1967), *What Pastor Russell Taught* (Covenant Book) (1967), *Pastor Russell's Sermons* (1968) and *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly* (1969).

After these projects, the work shifted to printing of customized tracts, booklets and publications—at or below cost—for various Bible Student ecclesias and organizations at home and abroad. Some 120 congregations have been supplied with literature printed in English or in foreign languages, having their own address printed on them. More recently, four-color work, including glossy covers for *The Dawn* and *The Herald* magazines and for many booklets, is also being done on a regular basis.

The brethren involved in these efforts have found it to be a wonderful and blessed experience. With the strength the Lord supplies and the prayers of the brethren, the work continues until He says it is enough.

CHRISTIAN MILLENNIAL FELLOWSHIP, INC. ⁵

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E-mail: ejweeks@comcast.net

Web site: www.cmfellowship.org

The Christian Millennial Fellowship (CMF) was earlier known as the Christian Millennial Church and, before that, as The New Creation Bible Students. The group centered around a single congregation in Hartford, Connecticut. In 1939 Gaetano Boccaccio began a nationally circulated monthly magazine, *The New Creation*, which continues to this day as a forty-eight page bimonthly.

The CMF is mainly a publishing and distribution organization for Christian literature. All of the staff are volunteers who work out of their own homes across the United States. Their goal is to share God's Word and Jesus Christ crucified with all who have a hearing ear.

A printing and distribution center is located in Houston, Texas, which issues the magazine as well as booklets and tracts on various Scriptural subjects. In addition, CMF offers three levels of Bible correspondence courses. Students throughout the world taking the courses are assigned to teachers who offer guidance and grade the submitted question and answer sheets. Also, for those with impaired eyesight, *The New Creation* magazine and some booklets are offered on audio cassette tape.

There never has been a charge for the magazine, literature, tapes or Bible courses. Donations from those who support the work have made all this possible for more than sixty years. CMF currently has a magazine mailing list of approximately fifteen hundred subscribers that covers more than seventy-eight countries, and a web site which has been effective in spreading God's Word.

CMF is not a church or central organization that exercises authority over others. It cooperates with similar believing groups in a loose affiliation. These other groups are known primarily as Berean Bible Students, Free Bible Students and Christian Believers Fellowship.

EPIPHANY BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 97

Mount Dora, FL 32757

This is a small group organized in 1956 by John J. Hoefle after separation from the LHMM. A monthly newsletter was begun, which by 1968 had formally adopted the Association name. It has always been headquartered in Mount Dora, Florida. The Epiphany Bible Students Association and the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement both preach that the "door to the high calling" has been closed for many years.

The Epiphany newsletter consists largely of reprinted articles from its founder, John Hoefle, and some from P.S.L. Johnson, both now deceased, as well as from Pastor Russell. Most issues contain a "Letters of General Interest" section and occasionally "Questions of General Interest." Many articles deal with Israel in the news and show how her regathering and development as a nation are in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. At the start of each year there is a comprehensive review of world events called "Retrospect and Prospect," and in the Spring there is an extensive article to cover the significance of the annual Memorial observance of our Lord's death.

In 1986 the book, *Pastor Charles Taze Russell: An Early American Christian Zionist*, by David Horowitz, a Jewish journalist, was published. It was acclaimed in the Epiphany newsletter and distributed by the group. The book had been dedicated to the memory of "Pilgrim John J. Hoefle, loyal and dedicated devotee of Pastor Charles Taze Russell and valiant champion of his prophetic pronouncements." However, the author in his Introduction erroneously contends that "Pastor Russell, in all his writings, proved that the theme of the whole Bible revolves around the return of the children of Israel to their ancient homeland" and that this is the main focus of end-time prophecy. For this and other reasons, the book received mixed reviews and only limited support generally from Bible Students.⁶

ZION'S TOWER OF THE MORNING⁷

P.O. Box 3261, Southfield, MI 48037

E-mail: zions.tower.ofthemorning@juno.com or
biblestudent@zionstower.com

Web site: www.zionstower.com

Zion's Tower is a small, independent publishing house that was established in the 1950s. It offers books and literature by Bible Student authors, mainly on difficult prophetic and chronological subjects. These studies are provided as a helping hand to the household of faith in these End Times when so many events are occurring in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. About thirty different titles are now available, ranging from tracts to comprehensive books, all in attractive formats. Some sample titles are:

Books

The Biblical 70 Years (Effect
on End-time Prophecies)
*A Confirmation of the True
Bible Chronology*
Foregleams of the Messiah
God, Angels and Men
The Keys of Revelation
*The Reign of Christ—
Present or Future?*
The Smiting of the Image

Booklets

The Biblical Prophetic Year
*Church Union and the
Antichrist*
*Disfellowship—What It Means
to the Christian*
Morality: Scriptural Standards
Satan and the Second Death
The Smiting of Jordan
*Timely Gems from the Harvest
Message*

A web site has been established where anyone interested can access most of these materials and find links to other Bible Student web pages. In addition, newsletters, videos, Bible Student Convention CDs and Zion's Tower Studies CDs are also available.

It is our hope to continue to provide these important studies, so that they may be a help to those who are seeking the Truth. The Lord has provided a way to understand spiritual matters, even amidst the din and cacophony of sounds in the spiritual heavens which soon shall end. We are looking forward to the grand consummation, when the long-awaited Kingdom will have arrived with blessings for Israel and all mankind.

Independent Publications

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH⁸

Lisle, IL 60532

E-mail: rdoctor@ntsource.com.

Web site: www.beautiesofthetruth.org

This publication was first launched in 1980 from San Diego, California, as a four-page monthly paper in an effort to provide “a forum for the publication of Scriptural viewpoints thought to be harmonious with God’s Plan of the Ages.” A wide range of informative articles followed, studiously written, on topics such as time prophecies and related historical events, insights into Revelation, lessons from the Great Pyramid, features of the Tabernacle, symbology of heavenly bodies and similar areas that were not being emphasized in other publications.

After several years, the paper was discontinued until reorganized in 1990 to become a quarterly with a Portland, Oregon address under the direction of a committee of editors. It contained articles on various Bible topics, generally written in a conservative scholarly vein.

Beauties of the Truth continues today along similar lines, with a seven-member editorial committee and a new address in Lisle, Illinois. Many of its articles are contributed by the readership. It is currently issued as an eight-page quarterly and is sent out without charge to nearly six hundred subscribers.

BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

c/o Miami Valley Bible Students Ecclesia

P.O. Box 41033

Centerville, OH 45441

E-mail submissions: Biblenews@juno.com

This quarterly publication was born in 1972 as an outgrowth of the Fort Collins, Colorado Convention and for many years was sponsored by the Dayton, Ohio Ecclesia. It is currently an ongoing project of the Miami Valley Bible Students Ecclesia in Ohio, whose elders serve as its editorial committee. The stated purpose of the *Newsletter* is “to disseminate news and information, other than doctrinal matters, of interest among Bible Students.” Its emphasis is upon witnessing activities of the brethren, especially of various independent classes that adhere closely to the teachings of Pastor Russell.

The *Newsletter* has major sections entitled “Afflicted and Isolated Brethren,” “Entered Into Rest,” “Our Brethren Speak” (testimonies given at recent conventions), “Harvest News” (public meeting efforts), “Serving Our Brethren” and “New Brethren in Christ.” Photographs accompany many of the articles. Some attention is also given to pertinent happenings in the world and in the religious realm. Convention listings are accepted only from those classes abiding by stringent doctrinal guidelines. The current circulation is about eighteen hundred copies per issue.

A special Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition of the *Newsletter* was published in 1998, with fifty-six pages recalling how it began and then summarizing the activities of the brethren that it had highlighted through the years. Various articles were solicited from some thirty brethren under major headings of “Call to Remembrance the Former Days,” “Republishing Harvest Truths,” “Grand Witness Privileges,” “Discovering Brethren Worldwide” and “Ecclesia and Related Activities.” Another category, “Benefits, Testimonies and Tributes,” consisted of extensive listings of those who were immersed and those who died in the faith in the years 1972 to 1997.

Foundations

BIBLE STUDENTS AID FOUNDATION⁹

Stock Yards Bank and Trust Co.

P.O. Box 34290

Louisville, KY 40232

Information contact: David Doran
New Albany-Louisville Ecclesia
(502) 239-3684

The Bible Students Aid Foundation was established in 1986 as a non-profit, philanthropic trust for the benefit of Bible Students and is administered anonymously by three trustees through the trust department of a Louisville, Kentucky bank. The trustees are Bible Student elders residing in three different regions of the United States. Their decisions are carried out by the bank in order to maintain the anonymous character of the Foundation's work.

The purpose of the Foundation is to supply limited financial help for Bible Student brethren in temporary emergency situations. It is not equipped to assist in major disasters or losses. As limited by its charter, it cannot fund witness work, provide tuition expenses or supply help on an ongoing basis to any one individual; nor can it make loans, give grants to ecclesias or assist persons outside the Bible Student fellowship.

The elders of the New Albany-Louisville Ecclesia function as information liaison between the brethren and the trustees of the Foundation. The ecclesia supplies the formal application forms to those requesting aid and its elders can answer any questions concerning such applications. All donations from the brethren to the Foundation are tax deductible and become part of the principal of the trust. Disbursements are made primarily from the income produced by the trust in order to preserve the principal amount, with occasional exceptions permitted.

The trustees are deeply grateful for all prayers on their behalf as they process requests for aid and appreciate the generosity of the brethren in offering their gifts to help fellow members of the body who are in need.

DIVINE PLAN FOUNDATION¹⁰

P.O. Box 813

Westerville, OH 43086

Established in 1969 to promulgate the Kingdom message, the first project of the Foundation was to help with the witnessing efforts in Japan. Through the years its work has been primarily to assist classes at home and abroad in various Truth activities. It does not undertake any projects on its own, but provides financial support to those ecclesias active in the Harvest work yet lacking the needed funding. Such assistance enables these classes to use the full potential of their capabilities despite financial limitations that otherwise would restrict such activities.

Examples of projects that have been funded through the years include:

- ◆ Producing thirteen radio programs in Japanese to present the Divine Plan, and providing copies of the messages in printed form.
- ◆ Reprinting *Studies in the Scriptures* or parts thereof, especially in foreign languages, and printing other tracts and books.
- ◆ Supporting Harvest work activities in India, including recent major public efforts.
- ◆ Helping to defray expenses of video productions such as “Israel: Appointment with Destiny,” and costs of showing such videos.
- ◆ Funding newspaper and magazine ads offering comfort and hope from the Scriptures after major catastrophes or tragic events.
- ◆ Securing a suitable building for a meeting place for 150 brethren in Cluj, Romania.

Donations made to the Divine Plan Foundation are tax deductible. The Foundation is grateful to all the brethren who have helped provide the funding that supports ecclesias in their varied activities and enables them to maximize their efforts in the Harvest work.

Committees

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA¹¹

San Diego, CA 92119

E-mail: davrice@aol.com

The Bible Students Committee for Africa (BSCFA) was organized in 1973 to coordinate the efforts of American brethren who were interested in expanding the Truth work in that part of the world. Trips were arranged especially to Nigeria to assess conditions, encourage the believers, establish classes and distribute Bible Student literature.

In those early years, it was customary for American visitors to spend as many as three months at a time, going from city to city to find interested respondents. Sometimes they traveled in a weekly circuit to lead studies in the same area on a regular basis.

In more recent years, the active “evangelizing” work in Nigeria has been chiefly through the Nigerian brethren themselves. Ecclesias have been extended through personal witnessing, family ties and village associations. There are about ten such classes that have been actively meeting, not including a large number of people in the southeastern part of the country. Many hundreds there associate with other churches or fellowships which have used *The Divine Plan of the Ages* to instruct their members.

The work in Ghana has expanded with periodic visits by American brethren, who in 2003 sponsored two seminar/convention gatherings to further develop the interest there. This effort was continued in 2004 with the addition of a delegation from Nigeria at the conference in Ghana. Intermittent visits by several mature Nigerian elders are also proving helpful. In 2006, a four-day seminar brought together brethren from America, Nigeria and Ghana. Its purpose was to help local elders in their understanding of the Truth and to increase effectiveness in leading Bible Student meetings.

Ongoing studies of the Truth are now also taking place in Accra, Dunkwa, Cape Coast and Kumasi. Bible Student literature is being sent out from the United States to Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

**BIBLE STUDENT COMMITTEES SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS¹²**

There are two committees in the United States that offer assistance to Bible Student youth who take the conscientious objector position against war. These are:

The Bible Students Coordinating Committee for Religious
Objectors (BSCC)

P.O. Box 144, Edison, NJ 08818

E-mail: kwrpeace@aol.com

The Bible Students National Committee for Religious Conscien-
tious Objectors (BSNC)

P.O. Box 60, New York, NY 10116

E-mail: mbalko@cfl.rr.com

Practical information and counsel is provided to help young people of the fellowship comply with the law in regard to registering with Selective Service at age eighteen and to assist those desiring to go on record as a conscientious objector. If a draft were to be initiated by Congress to bolster the armed forces, the Committees stand ready to offer guidance through the formal steps and filing of forms necessary to establish a valid religious objector claim. It is urged that certain preliminary steps be taken well in advance of such an eventuality to enhance the likelihood of receiving a proper classification.

All Bible Student youth likely to be affected by such a draft should contact either of the above-listed national Committees. Each Committee has a chairman and regional members across the country.

BIBLE STUDENTS FRIENDS OF INDIA¹³

Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

As successor to the Northwest Committee for India, the Bible Students Friends of India (BSFOI) was organized in 1999 and currently consists of four brethren. Its mission is to provide a pastoral service to the Bible Student churches of India. The committee does not typically allocate funds for witnessing, the printing of Volumes or the printing of monthly magazines. Those activities are supported by other groups or individuals. Specifically, the BSFOI provides:

1. Financial support for both Indian and non-Indian elders to serve congregations in India with Bible studies and discourses.
2. Financial support for conventions held by the Indian Bible Student congregations.
3. Help in improving the quality of class meetings, and facilitating communication and interaction between Indian brethren and brethren in other countries.
4. A sounding board for relaying the needs of the Indian brethren to the rest of the Bible Student world.
5. Limited humanitarian and material aid under special circumstances.

The BSFOI helps to subsidize the three-day Indian General Convention (now taking place each May) and the semi-annual Indian Youth Seminars. It recently provided funds for two computers so that the Indian brethren could translate the Fifth and Sixth Volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* into Tamil, the language spoken by the bulk of the Indian brethren.

In an effort to help build closer relationships with the next generation of Indian Bible Students, the committee has been encouraging younger brethren to accompany some of its members on biennial trips to India. This includes traveling to various ecclesias in South India and attendance at the Youth Seminar there. Monetary assistance is available if needed. In 2003 three younger American brethren participated in such a trip, and in 2005 there were two from the United States and one from Moldova.

CHICAGO BIBLE STUDENTS

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION SERVICE¹⁴

(formerly Chicago Bible Students Book Republishing Committee)

P.O. Box 661335

Chicago, IL 60666

E-mail: LDS@chicagobible.org

The Chicago Bible Students Ecclesia for many years has been in the forefront of publishing and making available various of the writings of Pastor Russell. The start of this activity dates back to 1965 when the ecclesia approved the reprinting of the original *Bible Students Berean Manual* (Comment Book), which proved to be a great blessing and assistance to the brethren. This was followed by the reprinting of the *Watch Tower Reprints* and continued with numerous other writings of the Pastor.

As the work expanded, a Book Republishing Committee was formally organized to direct the effort. In 1983 an entirely new reference series began to be published, called the *Expanded Biblical Comments*. This summarized the Pastor's views on thousands of Bible texts and required three volumes to complete: the *Old Testament*, the *Four Gospels* and finally *Acts Thru Revelation*. Subsequently, all three volumes were combined into one book.

One by one, the various writings of the Pastor and related works were republished. These include the following:

What Pastor Russell Taught (Covenant Book) – 1973

What Pastor Russell Said (Question Book) – 1974

What Pastor Russell Wrote (Overland Monthly) – 1978

Pastor Russell's Sermons – 1983, etc.

Pastor Russell's Convention Discourses – 1976

Harvest Gleanings I, II., and III. – 1978, 1980, 1993

Gems From the Mine – 1980

Manna/Songs in the Night (pocket edition) – 1991

Our Most Holy Faith – 1994

Most recently an attractive, eight-page illustrated catalog in glossy color has been made available. It describes over sixty items including booklets, videos and CD ROMs with study helps for computer users.

Conventions

Convention gatherings for mutual edification and uplift have been characteristic of Bible Students almost from the start—beginning in the early 1890s. Many of the ecclesias sponsor such gatherings on an annual basis and some of the larger conventions attract brethren from distant points as speakers or as attendees. The spiritual renewal and strengthening of the bonds of Christian fellowship gained there are considered by many as highlights of the entire year.

The conventions generally consist of Bible discourses, symposiums, panel discussions, question sessions, young people's activities and studies, immersion services, and prayer, praise and testimony meetings. Congregational singing of traditional hymns of the church as well as choir and other reverential musical presentations are a regular part of the services. Unlike many churches, Bible Student conventions are not for the purpose of discussing church business and policies. Those who attend do so of their own volition rather than as preappointed delegates of individual ecclesias.

It is estimated that there are more than one hundred such gatherings in this country alone each year. Attendance generally varies from fifty to several hundred at the larger gatherings. The “free” Bible Student groupings prefer to identify them as “conferences” instead of “conventions,” but their programs are otherwise quite similar.

Over the course of the year, many of these conventions are listed in the different Bible Student publications in response to requests of the sponsoring ecclesias. For the year 2003, there were forty-nine such annual or semi-annual gatherings listed in *The Dawn*. The notices in *The Herald* magazine were very similar to those carried in *The Dawn*. The *Bible Students Newsletter* listed twenty-one conventions for the same period, of which three overlapped *The Dawn* listings. Hence, just these groups alone accounted for almost seventy such conventions in the United States and Canada. The gatherings of the “free” brethren and those affiliated with the LHMM would be in addition to these.

The largest gathering in the United States is the General Convention, which is administered by a committee elected annually by the attendees. Notices of the annual gathering are featured in *The*

Dawn magazine, which also provides a detailed listing of the program and offers tapes of the sessions. The convention is generally held on six days in the month of July and has been at Johnstown, Pennsylvania in recent years, except in 1997 when held at Claremont, California and in 2004 at Orange, California.

Another large convention is the I-O Convention, an outgrowth of the earlier Fort Collins, Colorado gatherings begun in 1970. Largely supported by Divine Plan and other independent conservative brethren, it is currently sponsored by several Bible Student classes in Indiana and Ohio; hence, the I-O designation. It is held in the Midwest region of the country, usually in July or August, and is four or five days in length.

Approximate attendance at these larger conventions, including both children and adults, is as follows:

	General Convention	I-O Convention
2001	515	295
2002	500	200
2003	525	120
2004	420	130
2005	500	153
2006	435	80

The largest convention in this country sponsored by a single ecclesia is held semi-annually in Chicago. At the Spring gathering (three days over the Memorial Day weekend), attendance averages 300 to 400; at the Winter gathering (two days close to New Year's Day), 300 to 425. A young people's seminar is held just before or after the Winter convention.

The International Convention, begun in 1982, has been held every second year in one of six different countries of Europe—Austria, Germany, Holland, France, Hungary or Poland. Attendance has risen from 300 at the start to a peak of about 1,000, then leveling off in more recent years. The convention is managed by committees established in the United States, Poland, France and Romania. It is six days in length and scheduled in the month of August. Further details regarding this convention were provided in Chapter 11.

Radio and Television Broadcasting

“FRANK AND ERNEST” RADIO¹⁵

Pioneering in the field of witnessing the Truth on radio, the Dawn has been broadcasting “Frank and Ernest” for over sixty years. It uses a dialogue format to provide solid Bible answers to vital questions that may be raised. Many different Biblical topics are discussed and a free booklet is offered at the end of each broadcast. Radio has proved to be very versatile, allowing people to listen while driving in their autos, working at home or just relaxing.

A wide scattering of stations are used throughout the United States, Canada and overseas. The cost of carrying programs on the larger stations has become quite prohibitive, so that smaller ones are used more often. Outside of the United States, broadcasts originate in British West Indies (Trinidad), Chile, Ghana, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines and South Africa. Some of these programs are in Spanish and some are beamed on short wave.

Sample topics discussed are:

Thy Will Be Done
Times of the Gentiles
Peace Through Christ’s Kingdom
The Manner of Christ’s Coming
Freedom from Fear

The Truth about Hell
The Days of Creation
Christ the Foundation
No More Death
God Answers Prayer

“BIBLE ANSWERS” TELEVISION

For many years television has been recognized by the Dawn brethren as a valuable medium for spreading the Truth, leading to the development of the “Bible Answers” programs. These have now been updated, are one-half hour in length and continue to be placed on key cable stations and networks throughout the United States. The presentations vary. Dramatization is used in the majority to emphasize a key Bible doctrine and to gain the watcher’s attention. Where Biblical lectures are used, the format is enhanced with pictures, graphic materials and illustrations to help in visualizing the doctrinal concepts.

Mounting costs of the full-length videos have prompted the development of another technique: About twenty short messages presenting a free booklet, known as the thirty-second or sixty-second spot commercials, have been produced. These are currently being used effectively on a number of TV stations and networks.

Some subjects covered in the full-length videos are:

God's Kingdom	For This Cause
Can these Bones Live?	Current Prophecies Fulfilled
World without Death	Creation versus Evolution
God's Millennium	King of Kings and Lord of Lords
The Dream Is Certain	The Great Pyramid and the Bible

“CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS” RADIO BROADCAST¹⁶

On June 11, 1998, the unique program, “Christian Questions,” was launched on a local radio station in Groton-New London, Connecticut, with an estimated listening audience of up to five thousand. This broadcast was considered the culmination of God’s providential hand in the lives of three brethren who were seeking for direction in using their talents for Him.

The program is broadcast live using a call-in format and is designed to discuss various Bible-centered topics. Two host brethren build interest in the topics under discussion by raising intriguing questions that Christians might have. Callers from the listening audience are then encouraged to join the discussion and add their comments to the answers being offered from the Word of God.

Periodically, topics are chosen that relate to current events or are controversial in nature, to enliven listener interest and participation. On occasion, special guests are invited to give presentations on specific subjects, and broadcasts may be made from off-studio locations such as at Bible Student conventions.

All of the programs—now well over two hundred—have been recorded and are available on request. In addition, more than fifty “Christian Questions” broadcasts have been condensed into half-hour dialogues to enhance their use as a potential Truth witness on other local radio stations across the country. Sample topics include those shown on the next page:

- ◆ Does God supply your needs?
- ◆ Who should be baptized?
- ◆ Why did God choose the Jews?
- ◆ How do we rightly divide the Word of Truth?
- ◆ If God is love, why does He permit evil?
- ◆ How do we make Jesus real in our lives?
- ◆ The Bible and civilization—what is the connection?
- ◆ How much does forgiveness cost?

Further information is available from Christian Questions, P.O. Box 1837, New London, CT 06320.

“DIVINE PLAN” RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS¹⁷

For more than thirty years the brethren in the Fort Worth, Texas ecclesia have been using the air waves to proclaim the beauties of the Divine Plan of the Ages as brought to the attention of the household of faith through the ministry of Pastor Russell. By means of both radio and television, millions of people in the United States, Canada and some parts of Europe have heard or seen this witness to the Truth, producing numerous letters from appreciative listeners and requests for literature. Some have consecrated to do the will of the Heavenly Father, and others have devoted themselves to righteous living in anticipation of Restitution blessings in the coming Kingdom.

There are now some 225 half-hour television programs that have been produced, illustrating a wide range of Biblical topics. A lecture format is normally employed, supplemented and enhanced with pictures and photos, some with a dramatic musical background. Each program endeavors to weave in the overall Plan of Salvation and offers a free booklet at the close.

Through the years a number of different cable networks and outlets have been utilized. The Fort Worth class is grateful for the assistance of those brethren currently involved in sending the tapes to the various stations.

Sample TV programs include the following:

Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored	Teach Us to Pray
God Shall Wipe Away All Tears	Joy in the Morning
He Maketh Wars to Cease	The Last Days
The Harmony of the Bible	I Will Come Again
How to Study the Bible	A Wonderful Saviour
Creation's Divine Architect	The Chart of the Ages

Inquiries may be directed to Fort Worth Bible Students, P.O. Box 4085, Fort Worth, TX 76164, or visit www.divineplan.org. Periodic newsletters, a magazine edition of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, the seven-in-one *Studies in the Scriptures* (a hard-bound book containing all six volumes plus *Tabernacle Shadows*), and other literature are also available.

“THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE” TELEVISION BROADCAST¹⁸

Television is one of the most efficient and cost-effective methods of reaching people with the message of present Truth. The signal penetrates all boundaries of denominationalism, going through walls and touching hungry souls able to tune in. It is such a personal medium—like having someone visit to discuss the Bible right in their own home.

For more than ten years, “The Way, The Truth and The Life” TV broadcast has been beaming its glad message. As a result, thousands of First Volumes and Truth literature have been distributed in the Michigan area. Some precious “grains” of wheat have been found who have come into present Truth and given their hearts and lives to Christ in full consecration. Several continue to meet in our ecclesia today. However, after five years of local broadcasting, a curtailment of the program became necessary, due to mounting prejudice against part of the message.

Providentially a weekly TV broadcast on a national satellite Christian network opened up. The program is now in its sixth year and the response has been overwhelming! Thousands of *Studies in the Scriptures*, as well as other Truth books and videos, have been sold or given away. New brethren have been found in almost every

state of our nation and as far away as Alaska and the Bahamas. Several viewers have started small meetings and classes in different cities across the country.

It is the Lord who has made all of this possible, though not without much effort and sacrifice on the part of supporting brethren. This wonderful opportunity is not taken for granted and the prayers of the brethren are solicited that the broadcast will reach into the deepest corners of “Babylon.” There is reason to believe that there are still a “great company” of Spirit-begotten Christians in spiritual “Babylon” who will yet hear the end-time message, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins!” (Rev. 18:4)

There are now some seventy-one half-hour videos of the broadcast available on a wide variety of Bible topics. Some examples are:

The Raising of Lazarus	The Second Coming and Secret Presence
Israel in Prophecy	The Ancient Tabernacle
The Great Pyramid	The Final Week of Jesus
The Chart of the Ages	The Wheat and the Tares
The Occult	Exceeding Great and Precious Promises

An entire series on the Book of Revelation, in the form of a verse-by-verse study, is available on fifty-two half-hour videos. There is also a special one-hour video on “The Third Temple,” covering God’s dealings with Israel and His Plan for using that nation in the Millennial Kingdom.

Further information may be obtained from Christian Bible Students, P.O. Box 2692, Southfield, MI 48037.

Internet Activities

BACKGROUND.¹⁹ The Internet has opened up a whole new avenue of communication for the brethren at minimal expense. E-mail, web sites and on-line meetings have all been made possible through this medium, permitting fellowship and dissemination of the Truth around the world as never before. Such Internet use requires a basic familiarity with the home computer and proper utilization of software programs designed for this purpose.

The first fully successful Bible Student meeting broadcast on the Internet took place on November 27, 1997 between Wenatchee, Washington and Dayton, Ohio, with four participants. Shortly afterward, the CUseeMe (see you, see me) computer software became available, which opened the door to the more convenient on-line meetings as they exist today.

Proper utilization of this software program requires access to a “reflector”—which in simple terms is a single location that can be reached by other computers with the appropriate programs over a telephone circuit. At first, these reflectors were commercial setups and one was found whose owners were willing to donate time for Bible Student use in recognition of their being a non-profit religious group.

Foreseeing the time when such donated use might no longer be available, the brethren thought it advisable not to be totally dependent upon commercial reflector service. Accordingly, one of the brethren set up his own reflector and dedicated it solely for use of the Bible Students. This clearly was providential, because shortly afterward the commercial reflector was attacked by “hackers” and was lost completely.

Over the years, the quality of the Internet has improved, frequently allowing digital recordings to be made of the on-line meetings. Sometimes as many as ten per cent or more of those at a convention are now participating via computer instead of in person. The first such convention broadcast took place in February 1998 when the Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio placed their study convention on line. In August of that year the International Convention was broadcast, producing eighty to ninety additional attendees worldwide.

It has been estimated that from 1997 to 2002 there were nearly seven thousand on-line meetings, representing many profitable hours of study and fellowship time. Many brethren have testified of the special blessings that participating in these meetings has brought them. The isolated and those with limited fellowship have been especially grateful.

Typical of these is the following comment by a California couple:

“At on-line study nights we eagerly turn on the computer and step into a world unheard of only a few years ago. How quickly the Bible Students took notice and advantage to carve out a use for the new medium. Through the CUseeMe program, we now thrill to hear the voices of our beloved brethren worldwide ... all hungering for a better understanding of the Harvest truths.”

ON-LINE MEETINGS.²⁰ On-line Bible study meetings are held nearly every day of the week. Familiarity with the CUseeMe computer software is needed to participate in these meetings. In some instances, attendance requires permission from the hosting ecclesia as well.

These meetings are currently held as follows:

Sunday—Hope, Indiana Ecclesia: Volume Study.

Sunday—Southwest Oregon Ecclesia: Volume Studies and Testimonies.

Monday—International Internet Meeting (IIM), Romania: Bible Study Questions and Testimonies.

Tuesday—Springfield, Ohio Bible Students: Volume Study and Testimonies.

Thursday—Tennessee Valley Bible Students: Volume Study.

Friday—International Tabernacle Study (ITS), Portland, Oregon.

WEB SITES.²¹ Dozens of Bible Student web sites have been established by ecclesias, organizations and brethren in this country and abroad. They contain a gold mine of information that opens up a vast library of reference materials: Bibles, all the writings of Pastor Russell, commentaries, study aids, audio and video recordings, pictures, charts and other Truth literature. There are also Bible Student newsletters, periodicals and home study courses, as well as E-mail forums and message boards for live questions and discussion of Bible topics.

Since these voluminous Truth materials and opportunities for contact are accessible to people all over the world, the Internet has developed into a valuable witnessing tool for the brethren. Hundreds of thousands of pages of Truth teachings have been viewed by people in over sixty different countries, and thousands of Bible questions have been discussed. Some twenty or more individuals were so encouraged by these Internet contacts that they subsequently began meeting with various ecclesias.

The following is a listing of some of these web sites:²²

www.biblestudents.com (Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio—ABSCO) Bible study and prophetic materials of interest to Truth seekers.

www.bible411.com (Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick, NJ) Current events and doctrinal topics, emphasizing God's dealings with Israel.

www.chicagobible.org (Chicago Bible Students Ecclesia, Chicago, IL) Diversified Christian reading material on line.

www.dawnbible.com (Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ) *The Dawn* magazine on line (current and many back issues), all "Frank and Ernest" radio programs, "Bible Answers" TV schedules, and all Dawn books and booklets.

www.godsplan.org (Miami Valley Bible Students, OH) On-line books and booklets with Real Audio and Video content; interactive Chart of the Ages.

- www.zionstower.com (North Suburban Detroit Bible Students, Royal Oak, MI) View or download books and booklets on Bible prophecy, chronology and special interest; Audios and Videos.
- www.live365.com/stations/gospel_kingdom (Orlando Bible Students, Orlando, FL) Internet radio station named “Gospel of the Kingdom Radio,” running twenty-four hours every day. Includes varied programming of music; Bible, Volume, Reprint and other readings; Bible Student radio and TV programs; discourses and daily devotions.
- www.heraldmag.org (Pastoral Bible Institute—PBI, Pacific Palisades, CA) *The Herald* magazine (current and many back issues) can be viewed or downloaded, plus a variety of booklets.
- www.revelation-today.com (John Class) Verse-by-verse and topical studies of Revelation.
- www.heleadethme.org (Shirley Evans) Focus on Jews who believe in Jesus; home Bible study course using Volume One.
- www.pastor-russell.com (Eric Patterson) Biography of Pastor Russell and answering charges of his critics.
- www.food4jws.org (Rolando Rodriguez) “Food for Thinking Jehovah’s Witnesses”: their history and beliefs in light of Scripture.
- www.biblestudents.net (Rolando Rodriguez) An E-mail forum and message board.
- www.godsplantoday.com (Alys Schneider) Illustrated *Divine Plan of the Ages* in many languages.

Specialty Facilities

BIBLE STUDENTS' ARCHIVES²³

Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

E-mail: bkutscher@wowway.com

This is the formal name by which a collection of pertinent memorabilia has come to be known, as it was assembled over a period of years starting in the 1970s. It consists of material from Pastor Russell's day that was donated by various brethren and ecclesias, including printed materials, photographs of the Pastor and slides, records and equipment from the Photo-Drama of Creation. There are also slides of the Great Pyramid taken by the Edgar brothers.

In the collection of printed materials are found complete sets of the original *Watch Tower* magazines (1879-1918), "Old Theology Quarterly" tracts and the successor tracts—"Everybody's Paper," "People's Pulpit" and "Bible Students Monthly." Many old convention programs, hundreds of newspaper articles and Convention Report Books have been donated since 1982. When originals could not be obtained, copies were made and added to the "Archives." Primary emphasis in this collection has been on English language materials, but some Spanish tracts are also included.

One of the largest collections extant of photographs of Pastor Russell is on file. There are over fifty formal portraits and about one hundred informal photographs. These are in original print, original negative, or duplicate negative form, the latter on four by five inch (or larger) film for best sharpness. A project is underway to digitally scan the original photographs and the duplicate negatives where original materials are not available, at 1200 dpi for clarity. In the 1990s, these were recorded onto Kodak Photo CDs, but they are of lower resolution than that which is available today using scanners.

Copies of these materials are available to Bible Students that have a research need. Often, questions are answered over the phone, but when hard copy documentation is needed, copies are available at the cost of reproduction and shipping.

Through the years beginning in 1974, glass slides, records and segments of film footage from the Photo-Drama of Creation were

donated to the “Archives.” The hope was that someday these could be integrated into a recreated Drama presentation. Years passed as various attempts were made to do this, utilizing modern techniques, but which also proved to be technically challenging and time consuming. This was especially the case in dealing with the old film which was both fragile and hazardous. Currently all of the Photo-Drama footage is being digitized with the goal of completion within a few more years. When finished, about seven and one-half hours of the original eight-hour length (in four two-hour segments) will have been assembled from existing materials in the “Archives,” most of it from high quality source materials.

The collection of glass slides taken by the Edgar brothers at the Great Pyramid dates back to their original investigation in 1909-1910. This was subsequently enlarged by Morton Edgar after the death of John, bringing the total of these unique slides to over three hundred. All of these are slated to be digitized. Many are already on Kodak Photo CD format and are available to Bible Students who need them for tract and book production.

As unofficial curator of the “Bible Students’ Archives,” I wish to express my gratefulness to all who, through their varied contributions of materials, have made the collection possible. It is a joy and privilege to be used of the Lord in this way and to be of service to the brethren.

BIBLE STUDENTS RETIREMENT CENTER (BSRC)²⁴

Fairview, OR 97024

Phone: (503) 661-7045

E-mail: TheBSRC@comcast.net

In the early 1980s a number of brethren visited England and came back with a report that a senior citizens’ home for Bible Students had been established there. A survey then taken in the United States revealed considerable interest for such a project especially among brethren in the Northwest. After checking out some one hundred sites, a suitable property was purchased in the suburbs of Portland that seemed ideal. It was a four-acre parcel with a large home plus some outer buildings.

An architect was hired to draw up plans, and a brother who was a general contractor was brought in to supervise the project. In 1984 the actual work began, and much of it was done on a volunteer basis, with brethren coming and going to give of their time and talents. The initial phase was completed and the move-in of the first resident occurred in March, 1985. As time went on and the units were being occupied, more buildings were added. Eventually twenty-nine units were completed, and these are currently occupied by thirty-seven residents.

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION. The BSRC is administered by a Board of Directors that meets three times a year at the Center, assisted by a local management committee. A visiting nurse comes twice a month to check on minor medical needs. Weekly bus service is provided for shopping.

The substantial noon meal provided during weekdays is prepared by a professional cook. Other BSRC employees are a handyman, housekeeper, and operations manager. Grounds maintenance is done by an outside company.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES. Through the blessing of the Lord, the Center has become a spiritual oasis. It is a haven for senior couples, for those who have lost their mates and for those who love living in close contact with fellow believers. Two local Bible Student ecclesias—the Associated Bible Students of Portland and the Portland Area Bible Students—hold some or all of their meetings at the Center. These classes come together for joint meetings on occasion.

Other events include witness activity meetings and planning sessions for periodic outings. Speakers and visiting couples come regularly from Bible Student classes in the United States and other countries to conduct special Bible studies and organize various fellowship activities.

FINAL REFLECTIONS. In looking back, we can see that the BSRC has really more than fulfilled the hopes of the “founding fathers.” We are certain that without the Lord’s overruling, this project could not have been realized and become the blessing that it is to so many “older” folks. A Scripture motto in the chapel says it succinctly: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” (1 Samuel 7:12)

Distinct from Jehovah's Witnesses²⁵

A matter of great concern to Bible Students is the widespread confusion that exists in properly distinguishing between their group and that of Jehovah's Witnesses. A large part of this problem stems from the belief that Pastor Russell was the founder of Jehovah's Witnesses—a misconception that to this day is not denied by leaders of that organization. Unfortunately, many reference works and guides to religion in America have also inadvertently propagated this error and thus immeasurably added to the confusion.

Indeed, as outlined in the early chapters of this work, in 1881 Pastor Russell founded the organization that later came to be known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. But the movement which he began, as we have endeavored to make abundantly clear, was taken over at his death by a new leader who set off in a different direction and radically changed its character and beliefs. Within a few short years, as pointed out in some detail in Chapter 9, what had started out as a democratic, congregationally centered group was transformed into a highly structured, tightly controlled organization, with wide-ranging changes in spirit, doctrine and policy. Those who continued to hold to the Truths that Pastor Russell had taught found it necessary to withdraw entirely from the Society in order to maintain their identity as Bible Students.

The name "Jehovah's Witnesses" was adopted in 1931 by the take-over group, long after Pastor Russell had died in 1916, to further distance itself from the original "Bible Students." This fact in itself demonstrates the absurdity of the claim that the Pastor was the founder of the Witnesses or that it is proper to link him with its current widely deviant teachings and policies. Pastor Russell founded the Bible Students—not the Jehovah's Witnesses!

Let us note some of the dramatic differences in belief and practice that clearly distinguish the Bible Students from the Jehovah's Witnesses today. Following the lead of Pastor Russell, most Bible Students continue to believe:

- ◆ That the Heavenly Calling to membership in the "Anointed" remains open for all believers and that the Bible offers no other salvation during the Gospel Age.

- ◆ That the purpose of this High Calling is to develop a relatively small number of individuals—the “Little Flock”—for a place with Christ as Kings and Priests during the Millennial Age, for the blessing and restoration of all the remainder of mankind.
- ◆ That the “Great Multitude” is a spiritual class which, due to lack of zeal, misses the chief prize of the High Calling but is honored to serve in the Kingdom in a lesser capacity.
- ◆ That character development and growth in Christ-likeness is a major goal of the Christian’s life and is not to be subordinated to compulsory witnessing efforts.
- ◆ That spreading the good news of the Kingdom—the Christian’s present privilege and responsibility—can be accomplished in a wide variety of ways and need not be done primarily by door-to-door witnessing.
- ◆ That one’s allegiance is to Jehovah God alone, in full consecration and service—not to any earthly organization—and that such loyalty is based on love for God rather than fear of second death.
- ◆ That the Ransom Sacrifice of Christ is fully efficacious for all mankind and guarantees a resurrection in which a fair trial for life—free from Satan’s deceptions—will be given, and that such provision does not exclude the first man Adam or those who lived in “judgment periods” of the past (such as at the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day).
- ◆ That unbelievers of this generation are not doomed to die in the Battle of Armageddon, and that all who are willing and obedient in the coming Kingdom—the “Other Sheep” class—will gain life on earth.
- ◆ That the basic Truths of the Bible are eternal and complete—not constantly changing under the guise of “new light” at the whims of a leadership hierarchy.
- ◆ That the Jews have not been cast away by God or their promises given to others; that their return to the Land of Israel—even before recognizing their Messiah—is in fulfillment of Bible prophecy; and that a faithful remnant will

carry out their destined role of becoming a teacher nation in the earthly phase of the Millennial Kingdom.

- ◆ That each local congregation is in charge of its own affairs, including electing its leaders (elders and deacons), choosing topics for Bible study and conducting meetings with free and open discussion.
- ◆ That certain rules of conduct, where not specifically outlined in Scripture, are best left to individual sanctified judgment for proper application in their lives: celebration of holidays, military service, blood transfusions, etc.

Thus it may be seen that in large measure the Jehovah's Witnesses have deviated from the beliefs of Pastor Russell. They have lost the hope of the High Calling and the need for growth and development as New Creatures, focusing instead on required witnessing activities and the prospect of gaining life in the earthly Kingdom. They have abandoned the simple organizational structure of the early church and have adopted instead an elaborate hierarchical system with distinct levels of autocratic authority not authorized in Scripture. Having forgotten that Jesus' Ransom Sacrifice assures a full opportunity for life to all who have ever lived, they have corrupted the millenarian concept to such a degree that it is supposed Christ's Reign will benefit mainly members of their own sect, with all others destined for destruction in the Battle of Armageddon. These are radical departures indeed from the teachings of Pastor Russell.

To close on a more positive note, along with the Bible Students the Witnesses believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God; they are zealous in sharing their faith; they believe we are living at the End of the Age, close to the establishment of God's Kingdom; and they understand that there is no Trinity, no Immortality of the soul and no eternal torment. However, especially in their narrow, condemnatory spirit against other groups, and in placing inordinate faith in their "Governing Body" as Jehovah's supreme authority on earth today, they are far removed from the Bible Students.

Summary and Reflections

In the ninety years since the death of Pastor Russell, it seems remarkable that the Bible Students have not only recovered from the takeover by the new management, but have regrouped in a way that has permitted them to carry on enthusiastically in the spirit and vision of their founder. Building on the rich legacy left for them, they have continued in the work of the Harvest through a variety of ministries and service groups.

Maintaining the democratic, ecclesia-centered organizational structure of the early church, they minister to the spiritual needs of fellow believers and also reach out in active witnessing activities to the larger community around them. In the utilization of the printed page, radio and television, the Internet, public meetings, fair booths and other voluntary efforts to preach the glad tidings of the Kingdom, a widespread work is being accomplished. Those involved in these efforts recognize the providential workings of their great God, to whom belongs all the glory and the praise.

Such zealous activity in the work of the Lord gives evidence also of the level of commitment of members of the Bible Student fellowship and their continued conviction that only God's promised intervention can remedy the crisis times now engulfing the globe. Though small in number, they are determined to keep up their efforts in letting their light shine until, according to Bible prophecy, all such activity will be brought to a close when "the plowman [time of trouble] shall overtake the reaper [work of the Gospel Harvest]." But when the clouds of trouble seem darkest, their silver lining will at last appear. It will be the climax of human history—the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom—bringing blessings to "all the families of the earth" and the realization of mankind's fondest longings for lasting peace and happiness.

Endnotes: Chapter 12

1. Most of the data in this section was supplied by Carl Hagensick in correspondence and telephone contact on 5/3/2006.
2. See *Bible Students Newsletter* (hereafter cited as *Newsletter*), “The Glorious Light of Harvest,” Fall 2000, pp. 1, 4, for extensive reporting of various ecclesia witnessing activities and other efforts.
3. This section was based partly on communication received 3/20/2004 from Leo Post, and phone call 6/12/2006 with Ken Fernets, previous and current managing editors respectively of *The Dawn*.
4. This section, slightly edited, was written by George Tabac.
5. This section, slightly edited, was written by Elmer Weeks, director.
6. David Horowitz, *Pastor Charles Taze Russell: An Early American Zionist*, p. 12; *Newsletter*, “New Book About Pastor Russell Gains Widespread Attention,” Spring 1986, pp. 3, 8.
7. This section, somewhat condensed, was written by Charles L. Thornton, founder.
8. *Beauties of the Truth* was begun in 1980 by David Rice, who managed it until its discontinuance in 1982. It was later reorganized with Jerry Leslie as managing editor; in 2002, this position was filled by Richard Doctor.
9. Information in this section was supplied by David Doran.
10. See *Bible Students Newsletter, Special 25th Anniversary Edition, 1972-1997*, “The Divine Plan Foundation—A Short History,” by Edward Lorenz, p. 20; and *Newsletter*, “The Divine Plan Foundation—Year 2000,” no author shown, Spring 2001, p. 6.
11. This section is based largely on data supplied by David Rice, past chairman of BSCFA, and updated by information from Lee Hicks, who makes annual pilgrim trips to the region.
12. See *Newsletter*, “Important Bulletin for Religious Conscientious Objectors,” Winter 2001, p. 14, and “Will There Be a Draft?,” Fall 2001, p. 7, both articles by Kenneth Rawson.
13. This section, slightly edited, was written by Ernie Kuenzli.
14. Information in this section was supplied largely by Art Jezuit.
15. The sections on “Frank and Ernest” Radio and “Bible Answers” Television were based on correspondence received 3/20/2004 from Leo Post, managing editor of *The Dawn*.

16. See *Newsletter*, “‘Christian Questions’ Celebrates First Anniversary,” Fall 1999, pp. 1, 14, for further details of the startup by Shawn Armstrong, Jonathan Benson and Rick Suraci; also the Fall 2002 issue, “Radio ‘Questions’ Program,” p. 12, for later developments.
17. Information in this section is based on correspondence received from George Wilmott, dated 5/3/2004 and 5/14/2004.
18. This section, slightly condensed, was based on correspondence received from Ken Wade, 3/12/2004.
19. Information in this section is based on article in *Newsletter*, “Technology Enhancing Global Fellowship,” by Ron Palmgren, Fall 2002, pp. 1, 10, 11.
20. This section is based on the “CUseeMe Information [sheet for] Current On-line Meetings,” supplied by Ron Palmgren.
Note: General information and schedules of these meetings are available from Ron Palmgren at his E-mail address: oldron@oldron.com. Technical support for Bible Students using the CUseeMe program is available from Bill Zietzke at his E-mail address: bzietzke@speakeasy.net.
21. See *Newsletter*, “Report of Internet Activities,” by Associated Bible Students of Central Ohio, Fall 1999, p. 13.
22. This list is based largely on “Web sites for April 2004,” from Merv Hohenacker via Ron Palmgren.
23. This section, slightly edited, was written by Brian Kutscher.
24. This section, somewhat edited and condensed, was written by David Bruce, who oversaw the construction of the Center. Tim Krupa, Bob Wilson and others were also active in the establishment and functioning of the BSRC from the start.
Note: Although served by the Fairview Post Office, the BSRC is actually located within the City of Gresham, Oregon, and has often been referred to as “The Miracle at Gresham.”
25. For additional points of difference and further information along these lines, the reader is directed to the publication, *Food for Thinking Jehovah’s Witnesses*, available on-line at www.zionstower.com; to an insightful review of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ history and present beliefs, at www.food4jws.org; and to the booklet, *The Grace of Jehovah*, available from the Dawn Bible Students Association.

There is also an E-mail forum and message board especially helpful to former or disenchanted Jehovah’s Witnesses, available on-line at www.biblestudents.net.

Closing Thoughts

IN REVIEWING the life of Pastor Charles T. Russell, we are struck again with the realization that this was no ordinary man. Gifted with enormous talents and abilities, he devoted himself at an early age to the calling of God and the work of the Christian ministry. His diligent study of the Bible and church history and gleanings from other leading expositors led him to an understanding of God's Salvation Plan that set him apart from the mainstream and continued in the path of doctrinal reform begun earlier by other groups. His emphasis on prophetic fulfillments and nearness of the Millennial Reign of Christ, and rejection of Dark Age dogmas and creeds, marked the movement thus begun as unique and gave it a strong end-of-the-age appeal.

In his illustrious career of forty years' duration, a significant impact was made on the religious scene in America. Despite strong clergy opposition that employed almost any tactic to discredit his work, the Pastor was able to provide a clear alternative to "traditional" church beliefs and aroused considerable interest. As was said of Jesus during his earthly ministry, "the common people heard him gladly." His widespread travels, sermons, avalanche of writings, newspaper syndication and Photo-Drama showings kept him almost continuously before the public eye. But as we bring the sketch of this distinguished man of God to a close, what in particular might we emphasize here?

We could dwell at length on any number of impressive accomplishments: the Pastor's stellar work, the *Studies in the Scriptures* series, with wide circulation in major languages in his own lifetime and still regarded by many as the most outstanding textbooks on the

Bible; his thousands of stirring sermons, delivered tirelessly in cities across America in the days when transportation by train was the fastest means available; his prominence as a religious figure with frequent international travels and weekly syndicated sermons in newspapers in the principal cities; or his debates with leading members of the clergy and willingness to confront head-on any objections to the “Truth message” that might be raised. All of these areas and more could appropriately be cited in scanning the Pastor’s life and selecting some of the highlights.

Another approach might focus more directly on his unique doctrinal contributions, based squarely on what he believed the Bible to teach—which brings us closer to what we would consider the most important aspect of his ministry. He clearly differentiated between the authority of Scripture and the creeds of the churches, identifying such beliefs as the Immortality of the soul, eternal torment in Hell-fire, and God in Trinitarian form as precepts not taught in the Bible but gradually adopted into the established church as it compromised its early simplicity and purity of the faith.

The Pastor also saw clearly that there were two distinct salvations in the Plan of God—one for the faithful footstep followers of Christ, and another for the human race as a whole including even those who die in unbelief. He understood the role of the church in glory to be, not that of basking in heavenly bliss in mansions of gold, but of reigning with Christ for the specific purpose of blessing and uplifting the remainder of mankind. The masses of humanity were seen, not as predestinated to eternal torment, but as being given a full and fair opportunity for conversion and everlasting life in the Millennial Kingdom soon to be established upon earth. All of these were key teachings of Pastor Russell that come to mind as we reflect upon his ministry and enduring legacy.

However, beyond all enumerated thus far is yet another contribution that seems even more notable. Pastor Russell must be credited with revealing the true, noble character of Almighty God that had been obscured through centuries of reliance upon church creeds and distorted teachings of theologians who had been influenced by pagan concepts. Only by carefully examining the Bible directly was the Pastor able to discover an infinitely wise, powerful, loving

and just Creator, worthy of devotion and worship. This realization prompted him to consecrate his all to God's service in a ministry that properly honored the Heavenly Father as the author of a comprehensive Plan of Salvation that would bring blessing and uplift to "all the families of the earth."

Hand in hand with this revealment of God's great love for His human creation was the clarification of the person and role of Jesus in this Plan. Jesus was portrayed as God's only direct creation—the Logos, a mighty spirit being in his prehuman existence—who was honored by the Father to become the Redeemer of mankind. Jesus, as the obedient Son, acquiesced in the Father's Plan, willingly humbled himself to become the babe of Bethlehem, and faithfully laid down his life as the Ransom Price needed to provide Atonement. In carrying out this special appointment, his separate identity from the Father was clearly seen; and in its successful completion, he was highly rewarded with glory, honor and immortality—even the Divine nature.

How different is this Biblically sound teaching of the relationship and respective roles of the Father and the Son from the confused Trinitarian views of orthodox Christianity! Again, we are indebted to Pastor Russell for highlighting this matter and bringing it to our attention, for which he is deserving of our deep commendation and respect.

The detractors of the Pastor, however, tried everything in their power to suppress these refreshing insights and to defame the Messenger of Millennial Hope who expressed them. Sadly, they have succeeded in measure, especially in our day. But once again we would call attention to the insidious way in which this was done.

Have there been glaring errors in the Pastor's teachings regarding God's Salvation Plan, the role of the church, Restitution blessings for the world or our proximity to the Millennial Kingdom on earth which have been exposed? Hardly. The very reverse is true. Something else has been responsible for the squelching of these grand Truths of the Bible: It has been the barrage of vitriolic personal attacks against the Pastor, sensational in kind, with little regard for truth or fairness. They were designed to assassinate the character and integrity of the man, thus deterring many from giving

due consideration to his teachings. The Pastor himself went on record as describing this situation as a conspiracy against him by a significant number of the clergy of Christendom, and this continues to our day.

Upon reflection, it becomes apparent that this kind of personal attack is actually a technique of last resort when the force and reasonableness of someone's teaching cannot be met. In the theory of logic, this is termed "ad hominem"—when instead of answering the points raised, the rebutter attacks the character of his opponent. This should be recognized as being not only ugly and offensive to all who are just and fair-minded, but especially unbefitting the profession espoused by members of the clergy. Further, it is totally unacceptable because there is an intellectual responsibility to respond to the content of an argument, rather than attempting to divert or ignore it.

We submit that the beauty and harmony of the Divine Plan of the Ages as presented by Pastor Russell cannot be gainsayed by his detractors, and requires resorting to this technique in an attempt to undermine its value and effectiveness. Our readers need to be on the alert and mindful of this deplorable way of attempting to destroy valid ideas and in particular to detract from the hope-inspiring message so clearly presented by the Pastor. We trust that this book will serve as a useful source for obtaining the pertinent facts surrounding the slanderous charges of his accusers and exposing the shameful technique that is being used. Such an approach should yield its proper fruitage in permitting an unprejudiced consideration of the Pastor's life and teachings to be made.

Finally, we are reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus, when he said:

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:26-28)

As the events of the end-time church continue to unfold, it should not be difficult to recognize one among us who carried out the full force of this principle enunciated by Jesus. To his last breath, Pastor Russell gave his all to the special calling he had

received from above. All of his considerable talents, all of his energy and resources, were fully devoted to the Lord's work which amounted to laying down his life for the Truth and in serving the household of faith. In labors night and day, with no thought of personal comfort or ease, year after year he gave sacrificially of himself and accomplished what few men have been able to do. He preached the Word "in season [and] out," in every conceivable way and labored diligently to present it in its purity to all who had a "hearing ear."

It is our conviction that such a distinguished career deserves special notice and gratitude by fellow believers, which is of course all part of why this book was written. If it helps to raise the public consciousness as well, our efforts will be even more satisfying. In either case, we are profoundly grateful for the privilege that has been ours in pursuing these objectives.

We trust that the foregoing consideration of the life of this outstanding servant of God—Pastor C. T. Russell—and his influence on religious thought especially in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been a rewarding experience for all of our readers. The Bible Truths that the Pastor proclaimed in his day are vibrant even in our modern times, and we are confident that any who choose to look more deeply into this message of hope will find such study satisfying to both mind and heart. On this note we will take our leave and bring these thoughts to a close.

FAITHFUL HERALD OF MILLENNIAL DAY

The last of the “**seven messengers,**”
 “That servant, faithful and wise”:
The household of faith he nourished well
 From the Bible’s rich supplies.

The evidence shows this minister
 Was Charles T. Russell—a man
Who searched with a yielded mind and heart,
 And uncovered God’s great Plan.

Based not on the creeds of Christendom
 But from the Bible alone,
This servant of God brought hope to all
 And the Father’s love made known.

In Scripture, he found no Trinity,
 No endless torture in Hell,
No humans that have Immortal Souls;
 But great Truths he found as well!

The Ransom, our Saviour’s sacrifice,
 Provides release from “the fall.”
Joint heirship with Christ is promised those
 Who now heed the Gospel call.

Then, during the grand Millennium,
 The masses will come to know
God’s mercy and love, when here on earth
 Restitution blessings flow.

The time clock of God’s chronology
 Revealed the Kingdom was near.
The Pastor was quick to share the news;
 The prophetic Word was clear.

His newspaper sermons nationwide,
 The Photo-Drama display,
And Chart of the Ages all were used
 In proclaiming earth’s new day.

A forty-year span of ministry
 His time and strength would consume.
 Millennial blessings were his theme:
 To bring life and joy—not doom.

His message appealed to multitudes;
 But some opposed what he said,
 Maligning his name with false reports
 So his books would not be read.

He lectured and wrote extensively.
 For Truth, he took a bold stand.
“The man with the writer’s inkhorn” toiled
 And fulfilled the Lord’s command.

Rejoicing in God’s sure promises,
 The Bible Students today
 Still spread the good news of Kingdom joys
 That will never pass away!

E.L.R.

* * * * *

“The Son of Man ... had in his right hand seven stars ... The seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches ... And unto **the angel of the church of the Laodiceans** write ...”

—Revelation 1:13-20; 3:14

“Who then is **a faithful and wise servant**, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”

—Matthew 24:45,46

“The LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city ... and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof ... And, behold, **the man clothed with linen, which had the [writer’s] inkhorn** by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.”

—Ezekiel 9:4-11

APPENDICES

NOTEWORTHY QUOTATIONS FROM PASTOR RUSSELL'S WRITINGS

“A word fitly spoken
Is like apples of gold
In settings of silver.
A constructive suggestion
Is like a gold ring and a fine gold ornament
To the ear of an appreciative listener.”
—Proverbs 25:11, 12 (composite
translation)

“Behold, the man clothed with linen,
Which had the [writer’s] inkhorn by his side,
Reported the matter, saying,
I have done as thou hast commanded me.”
—Ezekiel 9:11

Appendix A

Concise Doctrinal Statements¹

Section 1: Jehovah God

The following synopsis is based upon various of the Pastor's writings as they reflect the Bible's teaching on this subject:²

Prominent Titles

"The Almighty God." "The Most High God." "The Everlasting God." The "Heavenly Father" (signifying life-giver). "The Father of Glory." The "LORD God" and "I AM" of the Scriptures. The mighty "Creator." "The LORD of Hosts." "The Holy One of Israel." "Saviour" and "Redeemer" (as designer of the Plan of Salvation). His name "Jehovah" (signifying "Self-Existing One.").

Basic Attributes

A personal God, Infinite and balanced in noble qualities of Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. "Plenteous in Mercy." Perfect in Holiness and Faithfulness. Righteous and Benevolent. Resplendent in Glory. Possessor of Immortality and the Divine Nature, never weary or dependent upon any other being or outside force. "From everlasting to everlasting." Unchangeable in

Being, Character and Purpose. Foreknowledge that sees the end from the beginning. Grand powers incomprehensible to the finite human mind.

Major Activities

Father of the Logos (Jesus in his prehuman existence as the spokesman of God), and together with him, Creator of the heavens and the earth, and everything therein. Sustainer of life and Caretaker of all His works throughout the vast domain of the Universe. Author of the great Plan of Salvation for blessing mankind; and its Executor through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Superintendent of the affairs of the Church, the New Creation, which He Himself devised and inaugurated, “chosen ... in [Christ] before the foundation of the world,” and which is “his workmanship.” He “hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers,” directing by His Word and Spirit.

The Fountain of Grace to His dependent creatures. The focus of prayer and worship, “in spirit and in truth.” “Ready to forgive ... all that call upon [him]” through Christ.

All “his work is perfect,” to be evident in due time to every intelligent creature. Evil to be permitted only as long as needed to instruct and test His people, demonstrate His gracious character and reveal the beauties of His Plan. His grand designs accomplished through various agencies, including the angelic hosts, harnessing even opposing elements for the eventual good of all.

Section 2: Jesus Christ

This summary is a composite of what the Pastor believed the Scriptures to teach regarding the life, death and exaltation of our Lord and Saviour:

“ ‘My beloved is ... the chiefest among ten thousand ... yea, he is altogether lovely.’ ”—Song of Solomon 5:10,16³

Pre-Human Existence

“We affirm the pre-existence of Jesus as the mighty Word of God, Logos or Spokesman,—‘the beginning of the Creation of God,’ ‘the first born of every creature.’ ... He was properly known as ‘a god’—a mighty one ... chief of the angels and next to the Father ... As he was the highest of all Jehovah’s creation, so also he was the first, the direct creation of God, the ‘Only Begotten of the Father.’ ...

“He was the active agent of the Heavenly Father in all His mighty creative works ... —angels, principalities and powers, as well as the earthly creation. ‘Without him was not anything made that was made.’ ... ”⁴

Earthly Ministry

“We affirm that the ‘Word was made flesh,’ became the babe of Bethlehem, and finally became the man Jesus, ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.’ ... Jesus’ baptism ... when [he] presented himself to John at Jordan ... symbolized his full consecration of his life to God as a [voluntary] sacrifice, even unto death ... As God’s Son, he was given a mission in the world to perform ... — ‘not ... to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’ ...

“During our Lord’s earthly ministry, he ... revealed the Father ... making known the perfect will of God ... He healed all manner of diseases ... wrought [many] miracles [and] ‘went about doing good.’ ... Not only did Jesus ... **preach** about the Kingdom, and **teach** about it

in parables, but the mighty works which Jesus did were intended to **foreshadow** the still greater work to be accomplished by his kingdom during his Millennial Reign ...

“[Jesus’] humiliation to man’s condition ... accomplished its purpose when our Lord had given himself, a human being, as our **ransom**, or ‘corresponding price.’ ... When on the cross our Lord cried, ‘It is finished!’ he had ‘poured out his soul unto death’; he had ‘made his soul an offering for sin’ ... ; he had permitted his life to be taken from him in obedience to the Father’s arrangement ... as the redemption price of Adam and his race ... He [had] ‘learned obedience’ through ‘the things which he suffered’ ... [and proved] his loyalty to the Heavenly Father by ... his [submission] ‘even unto death.’ ... ”⁵

Resurrected State

“Our Redeemer, after finishing the work of sacrificing appointed to him, was resurrected to the spirit plane—far above angels, principalities and powers—next to the Father ... ‘Him hath God highly exalted and given a name above every name.’ ... [He shines with] ‘the brightness of the Father’s glory and [is] the express image of his person.’ ...

“Hence, his resurrection was not in the flesh, but, as the apostle declares, ‘He was put to death in the flesh but quickened in [the] spirit.’ ... His resurrection not only restored to him a spirit nature, but in addition conferred upon him a still higher honor, and, as the Father’s reward for his faithfulness, made him partaker of the **Divine nature**—the very highest of the spirit natures, possessed of immortality ...

“Jesus the new creature, begotten again, was delivered in the resurrection—raised from the dead on the third day by the Father. He it was who ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God on behalf of the

church, which is his body ... and on behalf also of all the household of faith.”⁶

Second Coming

“We believe that, like the Father and the holy angels, our Lord [now] is a spirit being ... This is the Jesus who ... [has] ‘so come, in like manner,’ quietly and unknown to the world, as he went away ... Our Lord warned us not to expect him in the flesh; that men might say, ‘Lo, here’ or ‘Lo, there.’ ... He is to return as a thief in the night [2 Pet. 3:10, Matt. 24:42-44] and none will know of his return except those whose eyes of understanding will be opened to discern the signs of the presence [*parousia*] of the Son of Man. These will be his loyal, saintly few ...

“It is the glorified Messiah who is to come a second time, ‘in power and great glory’—heavenly glory. His Kingdom will be an invisible one as far as mankind are concerned ... He came at his First Advent to lay down the redemption price ... He ... come[s] a second time, as promised, to receive his church to himself, to seat her as his Bride in his throne, and to accomplish through her ... the great promise of God ... to bless the world—granting Millennial opportunities to the redeemed world of mankind ... The result will be that all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Not seeing with the natural sight, but clearly seeing with the eyes of understanding, all will appreciate his character and rejoice therein.”⁷

Section 3: The Church—The Body Of Christ

The New Creation

“The Church of the Gospel Age is frequently spoken of in the Scriptures as a New Creation—its ultimate members, the overcomers, being specifically mentioned as ‘New Creatures’ in Christ Jesus ...

“The test of membership in the New Creation will not be membership in any earthly organization, but union with the Lord as a member of his mystical [spiritual, symbolic] body ... ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ (2 Cor. 5:17) In order to be counted a member of the body of Christ at all, it is necessary that the old things, or earthly things—ambitions, hopes, prides, vanities, and follies—shall have passed from the will ... It is the new mind that the Lord recognizes as the ‘New Creature’ ... ”⁸

“To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach”

A concise summary of Bible Student beliefs, particularly delineating the role of the Church, was composed by Pastor Russell more than a hundred years ago and appeared in every issue of the *Watch Tower* journal from 1895 onward.⁹ It continues to be used by contemporary Bible Students and currently appears on the back covers of *The Dawn* magazine and the *Bible Students Newsletter*, and on the inside front cover of *The Herald*. It reads as follows:

“THAT THE CHURCH IS ‘THE TEMPLE’ OF THE LIVING GOD—peculiarly ‘his workmanship’; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief ‘corner stone’ of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come ‘to all people,’ and they find access to him.—1 Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2: 20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

“THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these ‘living stones,’ ‘elect and precious,’ shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

“THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that ‘Jesus Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man,’ ‘a ransom for all,’ and will be ‘the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,’ ‘in due time.’—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5,6

“THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, ‘see him as he is,’ be a ‘partaker of the divine nature,’ and share his glory as his joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4

“THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; Rev. 20:6

“THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35” ¹⁰

Endnotes: Appendix A

1. In addition to the sources shown below, see the Pastor's article, "Presbyterian Creed Revision," *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), June 15, 1902, pp. 3025-3029, which methodically compares the revised creed with Bible Student beliefs.
2. Principal sources used were:
C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, pp. 32, 193;
Russell, *The Atonement Between God and Man* (hereafter cited as *Atonement*), pp. 33-35; 40-41;
Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 17, 237;
Reprints, "No Variableness, Neither Shadow of Turning," Feb. 1887, pp. 904-905;
Reprints, "Special Divine Providence," Aug. 1, 1893, p. 1560;
Reprints, "Jehovah's Character Manifested in His Great Plan of the Ages," Mar. 15, 1914, pp. 5429-5430;
Reprints, "Jehovah Our God Is One," Aug. 15, 1915, pp. 5747-5748;
Pastor Russell's Sermons, "God's Infinite Wisdom and Love," pp. 168-175; "When God Was Alone!," pp. 483-490.
3. Russell, *Atonement*, p. 162.
4. W. M. Wisdom, *The Laodicean Messenger* (hereafter cited as Wisdom), p. 62.
5. *Reprints*, "The Sacrifice of the Christ," Aug. 15, 1912, p. 5085; Russell, *Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation*, pp. 57, 64; Wisdom, p. 62; Russell, *Atonement*, p. 84.
6. *Reprints*, "The Word Was Made Flesh," Dec. 15, 1907, p. 4108; *Reprints*, "Jesus No Longer Flesh—Now 'That Spirit,'" May 15, 1912, p. 5025; Russell, *Atonement*, p. 84.
7. *Reprints*, "We Believe the Bible," Jan. 15, 1912, p. 4956; *Reprints*, "Where He Was Before," Dec. 1, 1914, p. 5589; *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly*, "The Divine Program—Messiah's Second Coming," pp. 56-57.
8. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 59, 78.
9. *Reprints*, "To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach," Jan. 1, 1895, p. 1750. See also *Reprints*, "To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach," Jan. 1, 1904, p. 3294.
10. *The Dawn* magazine, back cover.

Appendix B

Devotional Guides

Section 1: “My Morning Resolve”

This meditation appeared for the first time in its entirety in the Jan. 15, 1913 edition of the *Watch Tower* journal, under the heading, BROTHER RUSSELL’S MORNING RESOLVE.¹ In an earlier issue, the Pastor explained that he had found the text in Psalm 116:12-14 useful for morning reflection. He wrote:

“The Editor for some months has been trying the plan of calling this text before his mind as his waking thought. He has found it very helpful, and now suggests it to all the readers of this journal.

“How appropriate that each day should begin with the inquiry as to what are the possibilities of our service or sacrifices in the Lord’s cause! What is more appropriate than that we should remember the benefits which we have received, as well as those which we hope yet to receive from our gracious Heavenly Father? What could be more appropriate than that we should resolve afresh every morning to take the cup of salvation, remembering that the cup of salvation is the cup of suffering, the cup of trial—his cup—the cup of communion, or fellowship, in the sufferings of Christ? As the Master said, so should we each say, daily, ‘The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?’

“What is more appropriate than that we each should take pleasure in following our Master, being made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that we may also be sharers in his glory? What could be more appropriate than that our waking thoughts should recall the vow which we have made to the Lord, and that those thoughts shall be open to all the congregation of the Lord’s people? We will not keep secret the matter of our vow, nor the matter of our obedience, but we will stimulate one another in the good way.

“Furthermore, we call upon the name of the Lord for help, assistance, that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts and the conduct of our life throughout the day may be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of our Lord. The day thus begun will surely be a happy day to those who have taken the vows of full consecration to the Lord. And what a happifying thought we have in this connection; namely, that so many of the dear brethren and sisters may at the same time be lifting their hearts in thanksgiving and making resolutions afresh.”²

In the next issue of the journal, as already mentioned, the morning devotion appeared for the first time in its finalized form. By the following year, it had become so popular that it was issued on specially designed “Morning Resolve Cards,” illustrated with a likeness of Christ, “The Last Supper” scene and a border of grape clusters.³

Many Bible Students continue to use it today as an early morning devotion. It reads:

“MY EARLIEST THOUGHT I DESIRE SHALL BE:

“ ‘What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD [for grace to help]. I will pay my Vows unto the Most High.’—Psalm 116:12-14

“Remembering the Divine call, ‘Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice’ (Psalm 50:5), I resolve that by the

Lord's assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfill my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the Heavenly inheritance in joint-heirship with my Redeemer.

"I will strive to be simple and sincere toward all.

"I will seek not to please and honor self, but the Lord.

"I will be careful to honor the Lord with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all.

"I will seek to be faithful to the Lord, the truth, the brethren and all with whom I have to do, not only in great matters, but also in the little things of life.

"Trusting myself to Divine care and the Providential overruling of all my interests for my highest welfare, I will seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement.

"I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because

'Faith can firmly trust Him, Come what may.' ”⁴

Section 2: "A Vow Unto the Lord"

In early 1908, letters were received by the Pastor telling of a tendency to relax the formal proprieties of conduct that had prevailed in the relationship between the sexes. Especially was this becoming evident in the greetings of one another in some of the classes and with "pilgrim" visits, in hugs, kisses and letters laden with terms of excessive endearment. This caused him to believe that the Adversary was mounting a special attack upon the Lord's people in this "evil day," and with "strong delusion" was attempting to cause them to think it less needful to express proper reserve and modesty in the company of believers. The Pastor saw a danger here that the special closeness the brethren felt for one another as fellow members of the body of Christ could be used by Satan as an occasion for temptation after the flesh.

While so far as is known the tendency toward laxness in maintaining such reserves did not actually lead to cases of improper conduct, the Pastor wanted to find a way that would practically insure

that such temptations would be entirely avoided. Accordingly, he formulated the following Vow, proposing that each consecrated believer bind himself more closely to the Lord and thus safeguard the interests he pledged to serve. The Vow was first specially suggested for the “pilgrim” brethren, then later was expanded to include the general fellowship.⁵ It reads as follows:

“Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. May Thy rule come into my heart more and more, and Thy will be done in my mortal body. Relying on the assistance of Thy promised grace to help in every time of need, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I register this Vow.

“Daily will I remember at the Throne of Heavenly Grace the general interests of the harvest work, and particularly the share which I myself am privileged to enjoy in that work, and the dear co-laborers everywhere.

“I vow to still more carefully, if possible, scrutinize my thoughts and words and doings, to the intent that I may be the better enabled to serve Thee, and Thy dear flock.

“I vow to Thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the Adversary.

“I further vow, that with the exceptions below, I will at all times and in all places, conduct myself toward those of the opposite sex in private exactly as I would do with them in public—in the presence of a congregation of the Lord’s people.

“And, so far as reasonably possible, I will avoid being in the same room with any of the opposite sex alone, unless the door to the room stand wide open.

“Exceptions in the case of Brethren—wife, children, mother and natural sisters; in the case of Sisters—husband, children, father and natural brothers.”⁶

The Vow was generally well received by the fellowship at large and many brethren were appreciative of the additional safeguard it offered for maintaining standards of conduct that were above reproach. However, it was met with a cautious attitude and even stringent resistance on the part of some brethren. The objections were sufficiently numerous to cause some stir and ongoing discussions in the classes and in forthcoming issues of the *Watch Tower*. In a series of articles the Pastor elaborated on the need for the Vow and for exercising “special care and particularity of conduct toward the opposite sex.” He also detailed the many blessings and beneficial effects that it brought to those who had heartily embraced the Vow.⁷

Today the Vow continues to find wide acceptance as a guideline for the fellowship and sometimes is read as part of the opening services at convention gatherings.

Section 3: Selections from *Daily Heavenly Manna*

In the February 1, 1905, issue of the *Watch Tower*, an announcement was made of the availability of a devotional guide under the title *Daily Heavenly Manna* for the Household of Faith. The book contained a Scripture text for each day of the year, followed by a brief comment taken from the writings of the Pastor.⁸ It received immediate acclaim and its continued popularity amongst the fellowship of believers has required periodic reprinting to this day.

To encourage its use, in a second edition issued in 1907, under the heading “Profitable Daily Tithing,” the Pastor wrote:

“If Christians allow the rush and crush of selfish ambition to deprive them of their daily portion of **heavenly food**, they must not be surprised if they grow spiritually leaner day by day and if ‘the peace of God’ gives place in their hearts to the discontent which is growing in the world, notwithstanding the multiplication of our comforts and privileges. Let us remember the exhortation, ‘In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.’ (Prov. 3:6)

“Our first edition of *Manna* ... met with far better success than we had dared hope for; and we have been greatly encouraged by the kind words of its many friends far and near. Some call it their ‘Heavenly Breakfast Food’ and tell that they feast upon the lessons as regularly as the sun rises. Surely the little tithe of time daily spent in partaking of its morsels of heavenly counsel cannot fail to profit all who partake. The day opened with such meditations is sure to be the better spent and more profitable. The heart thus turned to holy thoughts is much less likely to go aside from right paths than otherwise. ‘The wisdom that cometh from above’ is thus gradually and easily assimilable, and cannot fail to bear some good fruit in the hearts of the saints, and to awaken reverence in the worldly.”⁹

The following are a few sample selections from the work.¹⁰

A Peculiar People

“A peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—Titus 2:14

“A ‘peculiar people,’—not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor in foolish, senseless forms and idiosyncrasies; but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world. It has the Spirit of Christ—a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aims. It is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith, and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self-sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its King. It is peculiar in that it knows the Truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt.”

Manna comment, May 20, *Reprints* p. 2128

Shunning Evil

“Be not overcome of evil.”—Romans 12: 21

“We are never to take up or to use evil words or methods or manners. To do so is temporarily to join the enemy, or to admit that his implements and methods are better than those of the Captain to whom we belong. To answer anger with anger, evil report with evil report, bitter words with bitter words, slander with slander, persecution with persecution, blow with blow, or any of these, would be to endeavor to overcome evil with evil. This, which is natural to our fallen natures, is what we are commanded to avoid, that we may the more thoroughly cultivate the new nature. To be misled by the Adversary to use his methods in any of these ways is to be overcome of evil.”

Manna comment, May 25, Reprints p. 2215

The Trial of Faith

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—1 Peter 1:7

“It is your faith that is on trial now. In the calmer days, when the sun of favor shone brightly upon you, you were quietly laying the foundation of a knowledge of the Truth, and rearing the superstructure of Christian character. Now you are in the furnace to be proved: summon therefore all your courage; fortify your patience; nerve yourself to endurance; hold fast to your hope; call to mind the promises, they are still yours; and ‘cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.’ ‘In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ ‘Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him,’ and faith has gained her victory.”

Manna comment, June 4, Reprints p. 1823

Christian Satisfaction

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.”—
Philippians 3:13

“If any man consider that he has attained a satisfactory spiritual state, from that moment he may date the beginning of his spiritual decline. No present attainments can be satisfactory to a sincere follower of Christ who studiously endeavors to copy the perfect pattern. It is only when we turn our eyes away from Christ that self-complacency can be exercised; for in full view of the pattern our shortcomings are ever manifest. And if in pride of heart we do lose sight of them ourselves, they only become the more manifest to others. Only in the realization of a continual growth into the likeness of Christ should the Christian find satisfaction.”

Manna comment, June 11, Reprints p. 1885

Occasions for Prayer

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”—Colossians 4:2

“Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succor. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the ‘grace to help’ promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high minded and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the great Adversary. Every service for the Truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the Great King, and mayhap to have suffered something for His cause; and a reason for supplication for further opportunities for service and grace to use them wisely.”

Manna comment, June 25, Reprints p. 2006

God's Nearness

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”—Exodus 33:14

“The Lord is ever present with His people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to Him, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining, and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with Him. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call Him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption.”

Manna comment, September 18, *Reprints* p. 3251

A Wondrous Invitation

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Romans 12: 1

“To render all we have to the Lord’s service is not only a reasonable thing, but an offering far too small—far less than what we would like to render to Him who has manifested such compassion and grace toward us. And we should feel thus, even if there were no rewards attached to such a consecration of ourselves. But inasmuch as God has attached great rewards and blessings, we should feel not only that a refusal to accept would be an indication of non-appreciation of divine mercy, but an indication also of weakness of mind, of judgment, which is unable to balance the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for a few short years, with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory, in harmony with the Lord.”

Manna comment, November 6, *Reprints* p. 2642

Endnotes: Appendix B

1. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “Brother Russell’s Morning Resolve,” Jan. 15, 1913, p. 5165.
2. *Reprints*, “1913—A Text Suggested For—1913,” Jan. 1, 1913, p. 5155.
3. *Watch Tower* (original issue only), Notice of “Morning Resolve Cards,” Dec. 15, 1914, inside front cover.
4. *Daily Heavenly Manna for the Household of Faith*, a Dawn publication, 1948 edition (hereafter cited as *Manna*), n. p.
5. *Reprints*, “Pay Thy Vows Unto the Lord,” June 15, 1908, pp. 4190-4192.
6. *Manna*, n. p.
7. *Reprints*, “What the Word ‘Vow’ Signifies,” Oct. 15, 1908, pp. 4263-4266; *Reprints*, “Resolved, By God’s Assisting Grace,” Dec. 15, 1908, pp. 4299-4300.
8. *Reprints*, “Daily Heavenly Manna,” Feb. 1, 1905, p. 3498.
Note: The texts and comments used in the book were chosen from Pastor Russell’s writings by an ardent Bible Student, Gertrude W. Seibert. The name Seibert is sometimes spelled Siebert; the sister was a regular contributor of poetry to the *Watch Tower*.
9. *Daily Heavenly Manna for the Household of Faith*, Chicago Bible Students, 1991 edition, Author’s Foreword.
10. *Manna*, n. p.

Appendix C

Inspirational Pen Pictures

Section 1: The Heavenly Father

Author of the Divine Plan

“God in His wisdom and foreknowledge knew that sin would enter this world and bring its blight,—sorrow, pain and death. He foresaw that after their experience with sin, some of His creatures would be, not only willing, but anxious, to forsake sin and return to His fellowship and love and the blessing of life everlasting. It was in view of this foreknowledge that God formed His **plan** for human salvation.”¹

“The Almighty Jehovah, Himself, is ... the Author of the great plan of Salvation, and the executor of it, through His willing agents and representatives ... The proper view ... shows us the Heavenly Father perfect in all the attributes of nobility of character:

“Perfect in His Justice, so that the just sentence of His righteous law cannot be infracted ...

“Perfect in Wisdom, so that His plan and arrangement, not only with respect to man’s creation, but also with respect to man’s salvation, the Atonement, etc., were all so complete that no contingency or failure could arise, nor any necessity for change of the Divine Plan ...

“Perfect also in His Love, than which there could be no greater love possible, and yet that Love in full balance and accord with the other Divine attributes, so that it could spare the sinner only in harmony with the just program marked out by Divine Wisdom.

“Perfect also in Power, so that all His good purposes, and good intentions, and just program, and loving designs, fully co-ordinated, shall be executed, and bring the originally designed result; as it is written, ‘My word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.’—Isa. 55:11; Mal. 3:6; Acts 15:18

“When we thus see, from the Scriptural standpoint, that the great Jehovah Himself is the Author of the salvation brought unto us by our Lord Jesus, it leads us to more fully and more properly honor and love our Almighty God, while it does not detract from the honor, love and esteem in which we properly hold and reverence our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For we see in the Heavenly Son the Heavenly Father’s image, and recognize him as the ‘Messenger of the Covenant,’ through whom all the covenanted blessings of Jehovah are to be brought to mankind, and without whom none of the Divine blessings are obtainable.”²

The Great Emperor of the Universe

“The Psalmist says, ‘The LORD is good to all, and his tender mercies are over **all** his works.’ (Psa. 145:9) This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is His care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and His wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility.

“Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of His grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion—whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of His broad domains.”³

God’s Omniscience

“There is more or less difficulty associated with all attempts to think about the great Jehovah, His character and His power. The Scriptures seem to indicate that God has used various ways of manifesting His power to His people—to the Jews during the Jewish Age and to the Christian church during the Gospel Age ... God could make the wind or the flaming fire His messenger. He could make the great Archangel or an inferior angel His messenger. He could use as His messenger whatever or whomsoever He might choose to invest with the requisite power ...

“The details of how the Almighty has knowledge of our prayers, our thoughts, our words, our needs, are not furnished us in the Scriptures ... We do not think that any finite mind could comprehend God. He is too great for our comprehension, far too mighty for us to understand fully all His powers, His ability. Nevertheless we can apprehend some things respecting God, and are therefore invited in the Scriptures to study Him along the lines of His revelation. To assume that God is in every place, in every niche of space throughout the universe, seems to us an absurdity, not taught in the Bible ...

“We read that ... ‘The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.’ ... These

‘eyes’ referred to are the Lord’s influence, His power of knowing, whatever the means. Whether His power is exercised and His will executed through angels or through other forces and agencies, it makes no difference ... The followers of Christ have the Bible and the invisible ministries of the holy angels to provide for their interests and to providentially guard and guide their affairs. This, to us, is very real and of great comfort.”⁴

Vindicated in the End

“Many are Jehovah’s agents, and innumerable His agencies, connected with one and another feature of His creation; but back of them all is His own creative wisdom and power. He alone is the Creator, and, as the Scriptures affirm, ‘All his work is perfect.’ He may permit evil angels and evil men to pervert and misuse His perfect work; but He assures us that evil shall not for long be permitted to work blight and injury; and that eventually, when He shall restrain and destroy evil, we shall discern that He permitted it only to test, to prove, to refine, to polish, and to make His own holiness, gracious character, and plan the more resplendent in the sight of all His intelligent creatures.”⁵

“When the Lord’s work of salvation for our race shall ... [be] fully accomplished, the results will be to the name or honor of Jehovah ... It will be to the Lord’s glory that he should save from amongst mankind all who have a love for righteousness, all who under favorable conditions would prefer harmony with God and with righteousness, with truth and with goodness and purity ...

“The result ... shall not be other than that which the Heavenly Father in His greatness and mercy and love designed; ... The results of the Divine Plan shall not be such as would be a discredit to the Creator, a shame or blot upon His work, His character, His plan. The results shall be worthy of the One who conceived the plan: they shall show not only to restored humanity in the

Millennial Age, especially at its close, but they shall show also to all the holy angels, the Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power of God, and how grand and noble and loving are His thoughts and plans toward His creatures.”⁶

Section 2: Jesus Our Lord

The Word Became Flesh

“ ‘The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.’ [John 1:14] ... It was the Word that was made flesh, and hence our Lord’s was not an ordinary birth ... The lesson is that the great One, the beginning of the creation of God, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, came down from that glorious condition as a spirit being and was made flesh and dwelt among us, as the Apostle says. ‘The man Christ Jesus’ was not an incarnated being, but was himself the One who had been with the Father, and whose nature as a spirit being had been changed, exchanged for human nature as a fleshly being.

“It was when he made his consecration at thirty years of age and symbolized it in water baptism that he received his begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature, a spiritual nature, as high or higher than he had before. From that moment on he was the Anointed One, which in the Greek signifies the Christ, and in the Hebrew the Messiah. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, with the oil of joy above his fellows. And directly after this anointing came upon the Master, he began the work of selecting those who were to be joint-heirs, otherwise styled the members of his body, the under priesthood, the bride, the Lamb’s wife ...

“It is not the Word made flesh that was glorified and exalted; rather the Word made flesh offered up himself a living sacrifice to the Father and carried out that sacrificing covenant, completing it at Calvary when he cried, ‘It is finished.’ The sacrifice was finished, the Word made flesh had died, had ceased to be. Neither

was that Word made flesh ever revived. No, he gave his life a ransom for many, for Adam and all his race, and never revived as a man, never took back that sacrifice. Hence we may go free ...

“But if the Word made flesh died and did not rise again, what did arise from the dead? And who is the Lord of Glory that now ever liveth? ... The Lord of Glory was begotten at the time the Word made flesh offered up himself, namely, at the time of our Lord’s consecration and symbolization of that covenant at Jordan ... This new creature, begotten of God by the Holy Spirit, prospered, grew, developed, as the Word made flesh yielded and finally died. This new creature, which did the sacrificing of the man Christ Jesus, was the One recognized of the Father, the One who gave his flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51) ... Jesus the new creature, begotten again, was delivered in the resurrection—raised from the dead on the third day by the Father. He it was who ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God on behalf of the church, which is his body ... and on behalf also of all the household of faith.”⁷

Source of Life and Immortality

“We perceive that while our Lord Jesus came into the world to die on man’s behalf, to redeem Adam and his race from the sentence of sin—namely, death—he did, additionally, two other important works. The redemptive work was the principal one, without which there could be no future life of any kind. The laying down of life daily until the sacrifice was finished at Calvary may, therefore, be designated the principal or foundation work accomplished by our Lord. Without that nothing else could have been of any avail, but on that foundation the other two works could proceed. The Apostle declares that the Lord ‘brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.’ This means that no clear and definite hope respecting eternal life had ever previously been given to anyone—even to the Jews ...

“Christ brought LIFE to light by explaining to those who had ears to hear that he had come into the world to ‘give his life a ransom for many.’ (Mark 10:45) He explained further that the time would come when all in their graves should hear his voice in kingly authority, and awaken from the sleep of death—come forth from the prison house of the tomb ... Our Lord [then] fortified the testimonies of the prophets respecting the Millennial Age, which they declared would be a period of universal blessing, with nothing to hurt or destroy in all the holy kingdom. He showed how this could be by the various miracles which he performed; for he not only preached the kingdom of God, taught his disciples to look forward to it and to pray for its coming and blessing and power, but in the various miracles which he performed he illustrated that its powers would prevail amongst men for their blessing.

“He healed all manner of diseases and cast out demons, and thus gave evidence that in God’s due time, as the great Physician, he will be armed with the abundant power which will completely restrain Satan ... and when he will lift up the poor, the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, out of their present tribulation ... as well as the awakening of the dead ... Thus the Lord brought life—everlasting life—to the view, to the knowledge, of those who hear his message of the Kingdom and the blessings to flow from it.

“He brought IMMORTALITY to light also. In addition to everlasting life for the world, he opened up a way by which a special class of footstep-followers might share with himself the glory, honor and immortality of the Divine nature. The world in general was not expected to understand or appreciate this. On the contrary, the natural eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath in reservation for them who love him—for the new creatures—for those who are begotten of the Holy Spirit, and that make their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with him in the kingdom ... [This is a]

call to special discipleship, to walking in the narrow way, to be baptized with the baptism of death that he was baptized with—and thus by Divine grace through this arrangement to be fitted and prepared for a share in the Heavenly Kingdom—to sit with Christ in his throne, and participate in the dispensing of all the wonderful blessings of the Millennium to all the families of the earth.”⁸

Section 3: The Holy Spirit

The Working of Divine Power

“The power by which the Lord would grant his aid to his persecuted followers during his personal absence was something difficult for them to understand ... The Master makes the matter as plain as possible, calling the power, the influence which he would exert on their behalf the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth. As the influence thus to be exerted upon them would be sustaining and comforting, the Lord denominated this Spirit or power a comforter, a sustainer, a helper. He did not say that he would send another person to deal with them; no other person could deal with them better than himself. It was a spirit, an influence, a power which he would send, and this would fully represent the Father and fully represent himself, so that in having the Holy Spirit they would be having the fellowship of the Father and the fellowship of the Son ...

“It will be noticed that the Apostle, in speaking of the Father and the Son [1 Cor. 8:6], refers to them as separate persons, and that he does not refer to the Holy Spirit as another God, nor as the third part of God. Not that the Apostle ignores the Holy Spirit, however, for throughout all of his epistles it is recognized as the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, representing both Father and Son in the church. Nor are we to understand that the Holy Spirit is a spirit being—as when we read, ‘God is a spirit’—but that the word used

signifies the spirit of a being, the power, influence, will, purpose, strength or whatever proceeds from the person. The Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and from the Son as an influence or power, and this influence or power in the church of consecrated believers operates in turn upon those with whom they mingle. It is always a good and holy spirit or influence, and is thus clearly distinct from the spirit of the world, the disposition of the world, the influence of the world, the spirit of sin, [and] the spirit of anti-Christ ...

“Thus we see that God is a spirit ... but we do not speak of the Holy Spirit as being separate, as though it were a person separate and distinct from the Father and from the Son; it is referred to in the Scriptures as the Spirit of God, belonging to God, emanating from God; a Spirit of Christ, emanating from Christ; a spirit or influence or power which is all pervasive, which can exercise itself in any place or in any number of places at any time and perform any kind of work or mission ...

“The Holy Spirit does not operate at all in the hearts of the world; but, as our Lord declares, It shall be in you, his disciples, the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit or disposition of the Son, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of a sane mind, the spirit of holiness to the Lord. None of these qualities of the Holy Spirit is found in the sinful world; they belong to and are intended only for the ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus.’ The power of God operates upon the hearts that are fully consecrated to Him, energizing them, cleansing them, separating them from the spirit of the world and using them in the Divine service. The spirit of the world is the spirit of sin and selfishness; the Spirit of the Lord is the spirit of holiness and consecration to the Divine will ...

“Our Lord explains that the Holy Spirit as a comforting influence, as a guide, as an instructor and helper to the Lord’s people in the narrow way would be a gift from the Father. This agrees with the Apostle’s statement in the record of the Pentecostal blessing. Explaining the

matter, the Apostle Peter said that our Lord, having been exalted to the right hand of Divine power, received this Holy Spirit, power, from the Father and shed it forth ... upon his followers at Pentecost ... How beautiful is the ... thought; that as soon as our Lord Jesus had appeared before the Father as our Advocate and had presented at the Mercy Seat the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf, the Father was well pleased to grant His Holy Spirit, His holy influence and power upon us, and adopt us into His family and treat us as sons! ...

“What a satisfaction, what a comfort has come to the Lord’s people through their privilege of being used by Him and adopted into His family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, the adoption of the Holy Spirit, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the holy influence, the blessing of the Father and of the Son, guiding our judgments, guiding our hearts, opening to us the Scriptures, causing our hearts to burn within us as we are brought to a still greater appreciation of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of our Father’s glorious plan of salvation for ourselves and all the families of the earth! This abiding was not to be a temporary matter, for a day, a month, a year, but to the end of the age, age-lasting, for the entire period. How glad we are that this is so, and how blessed are the instructions and guidance which we have enjoyed!”⁹

Section 4: Followers of Christ

A Narrow and Rugged Way

“Here is a marvelous thing! Why does the God of love make the gate to the way of life so obscure that only a small portion of the race have any opportunity of even knowing of it?—and so narrow and rugged that when found many are so discouraged with the prospect that they make but little effort to walk therein, and gradually drift back again into the general current of the broad road? ...

“The answer is, that God’s purpose of mercy respecting the world (which entered the ‘broad road’ through Adam’s transgression and sentence) is to deal with it as a whole;—to let all have an experience with the wages of sin (death), and then through Christ to end the reign of sin and death under Satan, and inaugurate a reign of righteousness and life under Christ,—the kingdom of God. Thus seen, the ‘narrow way’ now open (which only a few see, and in which but a ‘little flock’ walk faithfully when they do find it), is not meant to be the way of life for the race in general. It is provided only for a special class, called variously in Scripture—‘the Church of Christ,’ ‘the Bride,’ ‘the Temple of the Living God,’ ‘the Elect’ or Select, ‘the Body of Christ,’ the ‘Little flock’ to which it is ‘the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom.’

“The gate of Faith is made obscure to insure that those who enter shall be faith-**full**. The way is rugged and difficult to insure that all who continue in that way faithful to the end shall be ‘overcomers,’—shall be of strong character. The special service for which these are being selected demands that they shall be tried as gold is purified, in the furnace of discipline, that they may be found vessels unto honor and meet for the Master’s use, when His time shall come for them, with their Lord and Redeemer, as ‘the seed of Abraham’ to extend the blessing of God to all the families of the earth (the dead as well as the living) (Gal. 3:16,29) and when they with him shall be the kings and priests unto God who shall reign on the earth during the Millennial age, to bind Satan’s power (Rev. 5:10; 20:1) and to open the eyes of those whom he has so long blinded and deceived. By these God will prepare a favorable way for all.—Isa. 62:10”¹⁰

Our Present Inheritance

“The New Creatures in Christ, having exchanged earthly hopes and privileges and loves for the heavenly, find the latter much more precious than those surrendered.

Earthly loves are often fickle, generally selfish. Earthly hopes are usually ephemeral and illusive. Earthly joys are, at very best, of brief duration and shallow. Earthly ambitions are rarely gratified, and even then have a bitter with their sweet. Nevertheless, we see the whole world striving to attain these ambitions, joys, hopes, loves, and we are all witnesses that their chiefest pleasure is in the pursuit—that with attainment of any of them comes a measure of disappointment.

“Not so with the New Creation. Their hopes, their joys, their loves, their ambitions, grow continually, fed by the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word. And they bring no disappointment, but satisfaction and the peace of God which passeth all understanding come more and more into their hearts, as the eyes of their faith open wider and wider to comprehend the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of divine wisdom and love, to whose richest blessing they are heirs and joint-heirs through Jesus Christ the Lord.

“This land of promise which the New Creatures enter figuratively at the moment of entire consecration, when they receive the spirit of adoption, is a land flowing with milk and honey; and though it has its trials, its conquests, its fightings within and without, yet not only do its victories mean joy and peace, but, under divine instruction and guidance, even its defeats are turned into sources of hope and faith and joy, by Him who is able and willing to make all things work together for their good.”¹¹

Section 5: Admonitions to the Faithful

Gold Tried in the Fire

“It is in the school of experience that we learn our most valuable lessons; and the ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fire of affliction, and who have been rightly exercised thereby ... It is under

such discipline that the soul is mellowed to a loving submission that calmly says, I can do all things, bear all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me. As gradually the dross of the old nature is consumed, and the gold becomes more and more manifest, these precious souls become ever dearer to their loving Lord. So dear are they to him that in every affliction he is near with his grace to sustain and his presence to cheer; and the deepest shades of sorrow become memory's most hallowed resting places, where the Day Star shines the brightest.

"Whenever a new trial is presented to the Christian, if he will but call to mind this precept of the Lord, 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,' it will stimulate courage, nerve to patient endurance and quicken to self-sacrifice. 'Gold tried in the fire!' How can it be tried without the crucible and the flame? How otherwise can the dross be eliminated? There is no other way. 'Wherefore, think it not strange:' let the fire burn; let the dross be consumed, and see to it, beloved, that in the heat of the flame you remove not the 'living sacrifice' from the altar.

"Remember that the eye of the great Refiner is upon you; and as the refiner of gold watches the metal in the crucible to see his image reflected in it, so the Lord, the great Refiner, has His eye upon you. He is watching to see how the precious metal of your character reflects His image. Or, in plain language, in every trial He watches to see what influences control our actions, whether they be influences of present advantage or worldly policy, or personal friendship, or earthly loves—of husband or wife, or children, or houses, or lands, or whether they be honor among men, or love of ease, or love of peace at any cost; or whether, on the other hand, we are controlled by the naked principles of truth and righteousness; and whether we will defend these principles with zeal and energy at any cost of labor or suffering, or both, and so fight the good fight of faith to the bitter end—even unto death."¹²

Our Responsibility Toward Truth

“A knowledge of ... [the coming Kingdom] should have a powerful influence upon all, but especially upon the consecrated children of God, who are seeking the prize of the divine nature. We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord ...

“You have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord; now the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up all?—to give up your plans and methods, and the theories of yourselves and others, to accept of God’s plan and way and time of doing his great work? Are you willing to do this at the cost of earthly friendships and social ties? And are you willing to give up time from other things for the investigation of these glorious themes so heart-cheering to the truly consecrated, with the certain knowledge that it will cost you this self-denial? ...

“The sincerity of your sacrifice of self will be tested in full, and will prove you either worthy or unworthy of membership in that ‘little flock,’ the overcoming Church, which will receive the honors of the kingdom. If you give diligence to the Word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for God and His plan, and such a desire to tell the good tidings, to preach the gospel, that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter; and this will not only separate you from the world and from many nominal Christians, **in spirit**, but it will lead to separation from such entirely. They will think

you peculiar and separate you from their company, and you will be despised and counted a fool for Christ's sake; because they know us not, even as they knew not the Lord.—2 Cor. 4:8-10; Luke 6:22; 1 John 3:1; 1 Cor. 3:18

“Are you willing to follow on to know the Lord through evil and through good report? Are you willing to forsake all, to follow as he may lead you by his Word? ... It is hoped that many of the consecrated ... may ... be so quickened to fresh zeal and fervency of spirit, through a clearer apprehension of the divine plan, that they will be able to say, ‘By the grace of God, I will follow on to know and to serve the Lord, whatever may be the sacrifice involved.’ ...

“Whoever comes in contact with truth, realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised ... Each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! ... Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!”¹³

Section 6: Millennial Kingdom Blessings

The Golden Age

“The period in which sin is permitted has been a dark night to humanity, never to be forgotten; but the glorious day of righteousness and Divine favor, to be ushered in by Messiah, who, as the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise and shine fully and clearly into and upon all, bringing healing and blessing, will more than counter-balance the dreadful night of weeping, sighing, pain, sickness, and death, in which the groaning creation has been so long. ‘Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the **morning**.’—Psa. 30:5

“As though by instinct, the whole creation, while it groans and travails in pain, waits for, longs for, and hopes for the **day**, calling it the Golden Age; yet men

grope blindly, because not aware of the great Jehovah's gracious purposes. But their highest conceptions of such an age fall far short of what the reality will be. The great Creator is preparing a 'feast of fat things,' which will astound his creatures, and be exceedingly, abundantly beyond what they could reasonably ask or expect. And to His wondering creatures, looking at the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of God, surpassing all expectation, he explains: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'—Isa. 55:8,9" ¹⁴

The Divine Healing Touch

"No creature of the redeemed race will be too low for Divine grace to reach, through the all-powerful and blessed agency of the Kingdom. No degradation of sin will be too deep for the hand of mercy to fathom, to rescue the blood-bought soul; no darkness of ignorance and superstition will be so dense in any heart but that the light of Divine truth and love will penetrate its gloom and bring to it a knowledge of the joy and gladness of the new day, and an opportunity to share the same by obedience. No disease that can attack and pollute the physical system will be beyond the prompt control of the Great Physician. And no deformity, or monstrosity, or superfluity, or redundancy, or mental imbecility will be able to resist His healing touch.

"The grand work of restitution, thus begun on the living nations, will presently extend to all the sleeping families of the earth; for the hour is coming, yea, is not far distant, when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth:—'when death and hades [the grave] shall give up the dead which are in them; and the sea shall give up its dead.'—John 5:28,29; Rev. 20:13 ...

"What a glorious prospect the new dispensation will present when fully inaugurated! ... No wonder that the

thoughts of such a spectacle—of a whole race returning to God with songs of praise and everlasting joy upon their heads—should seem almost too good to believe; but He who has promised is able also to perform all His good pleasure. Though sorrow and sighing seem almost inseparable from our being, yet sorrow and sighing **shall flee away**; though weeping in sackcloth and ashes has endured throughout the long night of the dominion of sin and death, yet joy awaits the Millennial morning, and all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and beauty shall be given for ashes, and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness.”¹⁵

Restored to Perfection

“Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth’s society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.—Rev. 21:4”¹⁶

The Desire of All Nations

“Truly, it is a groaning creation still; and yet, as the apostle suggests, they are not hopeless; they are waiting for something, they know not exactly what—a panacea for sickness and pain and sorrow and death, and a just and righteous government, which will lift up the

poorest and meanest from the mire of ignorance and squalor, to comfort and happiness and a share of life's luxuries. They are looking forward to a 'good time coming,' 'a golden age,' of which even heathen poets and philosophers have dreamed in glowing terms. And some, catching a strain from the divine inspiration, though unconscious of how it will be brought about, sing of a blessed millennium ...

"But what heathen poets and philosophers, and all mankind have longed and vaguely hoped for,—but have proved themselves utterly incapable of bringing about, with all their state-craft and priest-craft, and multiplied religious ceremonies and forms of godliness without the power,—God, through His prophets, has clearly and definitely foretold, will come. And further, He has shown exactly, how it is to be brought about,—that it is to come to pass through the agency of the Lord Jesus Christ, the messenger of Jehovah, who nearly nineteen centuries ago redeemed the world, giving his life as the ransom-price for the life of the world; and who will shortly set up his Millennial kingdom and establish his authority over the redeemed world.

"He will not oppress the people and exalt himself, as human rulers generally do; but will 'bless all the families of the earth' through a wise and righteous administration. Having 'tasted death for every man,' and thus secured the right to give everlasting life to all who shall prove themselves worthy of it, the object of his Millennial reign will be to so instruct, train and discipline men, as to enable them to become worthy of lasting life, on the original conditions—perfection and obedience ...

"When Christ's kingdom has come, it will indeed be 'the desire of all nations.' It will be just what all men need. At first it will rule with a rod of iron dashing the now tottering kingdoms of this world in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:9), breaking up every civil, social and religious system of tyranny and oppression,

putting down all authority and power opposed to it, humbling the proud and high-minded, and finally teaching all the world to be still and know that the Lord's Anointed has taken the dominion.—Psa. 46:10

“Then the blessings of its peaceful reign will begin to be experienced. Truth and equity will be established on a sure and permanent footing; ‘justice will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet’ (Isa. 28:17), and the great restitution work will progress grandly to its glorious consummation.

“There will be sweeping moral reforms, great educational and philanthropic enterprises, wonderful faith-cures from every disease and deformity, mental and physical. There will be awakenings also from death, and a grand re-organization of society under the new order of the Kingdom of God. And all the world's bitter experience during the six thousand years past will prove a valuable lesson, on the exceeding sinfulness of sin; helping them to appreciate the new rule of righteousness, and to live in everlasting conformity to the perfect will of God, and thus to accept God's gift of everlasting life, designed for all who will receive it on his conditions of love and loyalty and obedience to him. Then, ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’—Rev. 22:17”¹⁷

The Highway of Holiness

“The various arrangements of the Millennial kingdom will ... make the way to life easy of access. Its gate of faithful obedience will be clearly seen and easily accessible to all; and its name correspondingly will no longer be the narrow way, but the King's highway of holiness [Isa. 35:8], leading to life everlasting, and open to all who desire righteousness.—John 10:16

“As the prince of darkness (Satan) rules now over the broad road and its blinded millions whom he leads **downward** to death, so there the Prince of Light (Christ, Head and body) will rule over mankind, for

whom he will open up the highway of holiness, upon which millions will go **upward** to life eternal. It is as a means to this end that he is selecting his church, is causing the great trouble to come upon the world, and will shortly bind Satan for the thousand years of his reign. And, more than this, he will open the blinded eyes that **all may see** the light of the knowledge of the goodness of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. 4:6

“When Satan no longer has power to deceive men and to put good for evil and evil for good; when the eyes of their understanding have been opened to see and appreciate ‘the true Light,’—until ‘every man that cometh into the world’ has been thus enlightened (John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:6); when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the depths of the sea ... ; when there shall no longer be necessity to teach, every man his neighbor, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because **all** shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:34); when the Lord’s kingdom shall have come and his will is done on earth **as** it is done in heaven—instead of the message of the Gospel being limited to a few, all will know the plan of God; and the evidences of its truth will be so clear and convincing that none will have excuse for disbelief; for the conditions will be such that doubt would be more difficult than is belief at present ...

“Not only will men learn unquestionably that Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; but more, they will **see** and feel the restitution work begun, in themselves and in their fellows. (Acts 3:19-21; Ezek. 16:48-50,53-55,60-63) They will see righteousness ruling the world **unto** or toward life, instead of as now sin reigning and all of its influences tending **unto death**. They will see great changes in the climate of the earth because ‘he that hath the power of death, that is the devil’ (Heb. 2:14), will no longer be ‘the prince [ruler] of the power of the air’ (Eph. 2:2), and ‘the wilderness and the solitary place

shall rejoice' and 'the earth shall yield her **increase**' (Isa. 35; Ezek. 34:27); for the microbes of destruction and disease shall be restrained and 'nothing shall hurt nor destroy' in all God's holy Kingdom.—Isa. 11 :9

“Sickness and pain and all diseases will yield to the power of the Great Physician upon the throne; and he will not permit death to befall any except those who shall intelligently and willfully refuse his offers of full restitution, by rejecting the terms of obedience required under the New Covenant then open to all. And even these shall be liberally dealt with; for our Lord willeth not the death of him that dieth, but would rather that all should turn unto him and live ... Their progress in restitution beyond the common advantages will depend upon their willingness or unwillingness to come into accord with that kingdom and its righteous arrangements.”¹⁸

Endnotes: Appendix C

1. *Watch Tower Reprints* (hereafter cited as *Reprints*), “Hallelujah! What A Savior!”, Dec. 1, 1903, p. 3280.
2. C. T. Russell (hereafter cited as Russell), *The Atonement Between God and Man*, pp. 33-35.
3. *Reprints*, “Special Divine Providence,” Aug. 1, 1893, p. 1560.
4. *Reprints*, “The Ministry of Angels,” Feb. 15, 1915, pp. 5633-5635.
5. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 17.
6. *Reprints*, “God’s Ways Higher Than Man’s Ways,” July 15, 1905, pp. 3597-3598.
7. *Reprints*, “The Word Was Made Flesh,” Dec. 15, 1907, pp. 4106-4108.
8. *Reprints*, “Christ Brought Life and Immortality to Light Through the Gospel,” Mar. 15, 1904, pp. 3337-3338.
9. *Reprints*, “The Holy Spirit Promised,” May 1, 1908, pp. 4164-4167.
10. *Reprints*, “The King’s Highway,” Feb. 15, 1895 (hereafter cited as “Highway”), p. 1771.
11. Russell, *The New Creation*, pp. 659-660.
12. *Reprints*, “Gold Tried in the Fire,” Mar. 1, 1896, p. 1944.
13. Russell, *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (hereafter cited as *Divine Plan*), pp. 346-349.
14. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 9-10.
15. Russell, *The Battle of Armageddon*, pp. 639-642.
16. Russell, *Divine Plan*, pp. 191-192.
17. *Reprints*, “The Desire of All Nations,” Jan.-Feb., 1889, pp. 1092-1095.
18. *Reprints*, “Highway,” pp. 1771-1772.

Appendix D

The Chart of the Ages

A COPY OF the Chart of the Ages was sent to all *Watch Tower* subscribers in July, 1881. That same year it was presented and explained in the widely distributed publication, *Food for Thinking Christians*. This entire pamphlet also appeared as a special *Watch Tower* issue for September, 1881; its size, when folded, was that of a standard newspaper.

In that special issue the Pastor wrote:

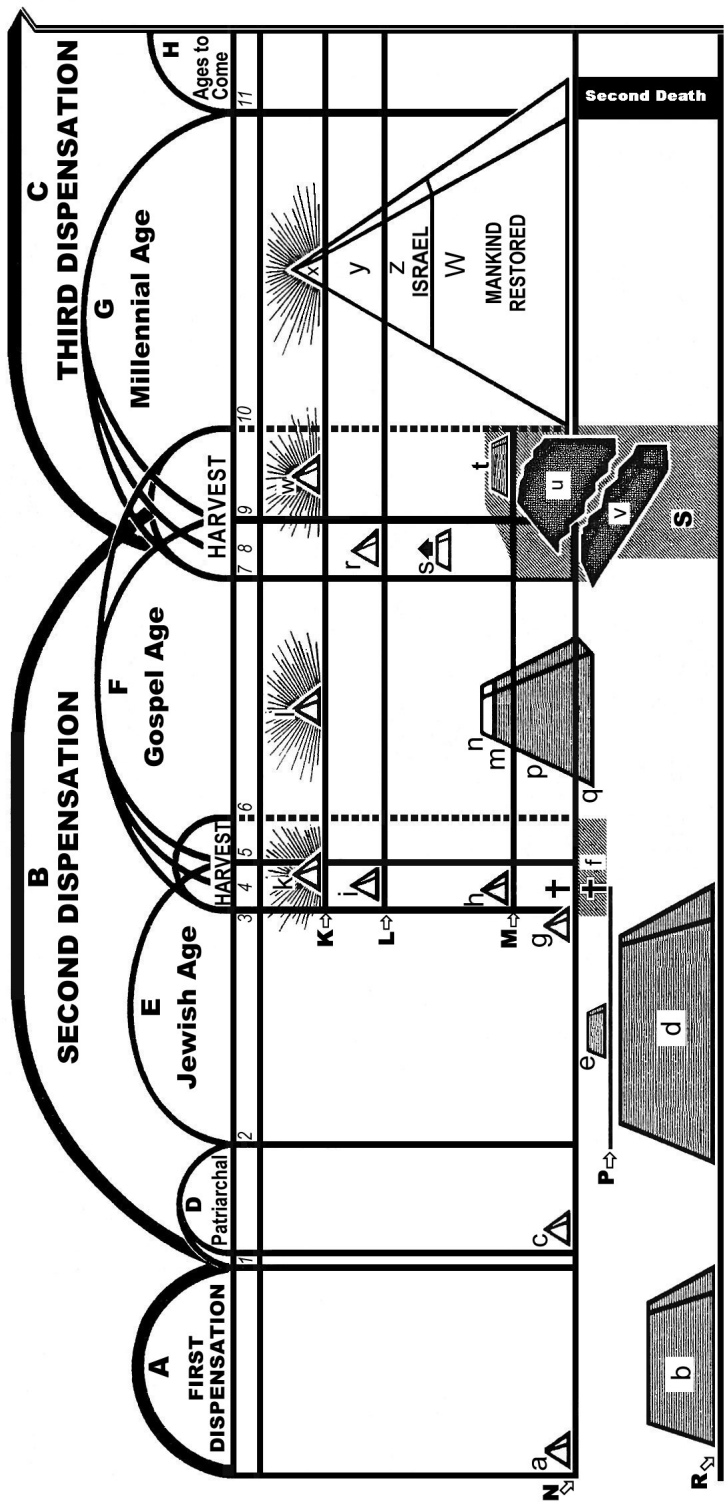
“In this diagram, or chart ... we have sought to aid the mind through the eye, to understand something of the progressive character of God’s plan; also, the progressive steps which must be taken by all who ever attain to the divine nature.”¹

With the publication of *The Divine Plan of the Ages* in 1886, a whole chapter was devoted to the explanation of the Chart.² The Chart itself was folded and fastened to the inside back cover of the book. Through the years it has been widely used by Bible Students to highlight God’s Plan of Salvation and it has become a symbol of the movement itself.

The Chart of the Ages (a blueprint of the Divine Plan), and the Key to the Chart of the Ages (an explanation of the Chart symbols in summary form) are shown on the next two pages.³

CHART OF THE AGES

“Write down the Vision and make it plain upon tables, that every one may read it fluently.” (Hab. 2:2)



ILLUSTRATING THE PLAN OF GOD FOR BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, AND HIS PURPOSE—

“... to reunite all things under one Head, even under the Anointed One, the things in heaven and the things on earth—under Him.”—Eph. 1:10

KEY TO CHART OF THE AGES

AGES (Time Periods):

- A—The world that was—1st dispensation (2 Pet. 3:6; Gen. 6:11-13; Heb. 2:5)
- B—The present evil world—2nd dispensation (Gal. 1:4; 1 John 5:19; Mal. 3:15)
- C—The world to come—3rd dispensation (Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Eph. 1:10)
- D—Patriarchal Age (Acts 7:8)
- E—Jewish Age (Deut. 7:6; Psa. 147:19,20; Amos 3:2)
- F—Gospel Age (Mark 1:14,15; Acts 15:14; Matt. 24:14)
- G—Millennial Age (1 Cor. 15:25; Rev. 20:1-6)
- H—Ages to come (Eph. 2:7; Eph. 3:21)
- f—Israel's time of trouble in Jewish harvest; separation of wheat and chaff (Luke 3:16,17)
- S—World's time of trouble in Gospel harvest: separation of wheat and tares (Matt. 13:30,38-40; Rev. 14:15,18)

PLANES (Steps to Glory):

- K—State of Divine glory & power of office (Phil. 2:8-11; Rev. 3:21)
- L—State of spirit birth (John 3:8; 1 John 3:2)
- M—State of spirit begettal (Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 1:3,4)
- N—State of God's favor (to humans) (James 2:23; Rom. 5:8,9,19)
- P—State of God's typical favor (Lev. 16:30; Heb. 9:7-10)
- R—State of sin and depravity (Rom. 5:12; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10)

PYRAMIDS (Individuals or Classes of People):

- a—Adam in perfection (Gen. 1:27,31)
- b—Fallen Adam and his posterity, before the flood (Gen. 6:5)

- c—Ancient worthies as individuals (Rom. 4:2,3; Ezek. 14:20; Heb. 11)
- d—Mankind from flood to Millennial Age (Rom. 5:12; 1 John 5:19)
- e—Fleshly Israel typically justified as a nation (Lev. 16:33,34; Heb. 10:1)
- g—Jesus at age 30, a perfect man (Heb. 10:5; John 1:29-32)
- h—Jesus, spirit-begotten at Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17; Heb. 4:15)
- i—Jesus, resurrected as a Divine being (Matt. 28:18; John 5:26)
- k—Jesus, 40 days after resurrection, in Divine glory (Acts 1:9; Heb. 9:24)
- l—Jesus, in Gospel Age, set down with Father on throne (Heb. 6:20; Rev. 3:21)
- m—Spirit-begotten class who become the Great Company (1 Cor. 3:11,15)
- n—Spirit-begotten class who become the Bride of Christ (Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Pet. 2:9,10; Gal. 5:22-25)
- p—Believers, but not fully consecrated (Mark 9:41; Acts 26:27,28; Matt. 22:14)
- q—"Wolves in sheep's clothing"; churchgoers but not believers; hypocrites (Zech. 11:16; Matt. 7:15; Matt. 15:8,9)
- r—Jesus, in his second advent (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16)
- s—Little Flock, separating from Babylon (Rev. 18:1-5; 1 Thess. 4:16,17)
- t—Great Company, failing to gain chief reward (Rev. 7:13-17; 1 Cor. 3:13,15)
- u—Babylon, large segment of nominal church, falling: some remaining on Plane N, others falling below (Rev. 3:15,16; Rev. 16:19)
- v—Babylon, hypocrite element of nominal church, falling to Plane R with unbelievers (Rev. 18:2; Matt. 24:51)
- w—The glorified Christ, head and body (Rev. 19:7,8; Rev. 21:2)
- x—The glorified Christ class, reigning (Jude 14,15; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 20:4,6)
- y—The Great Company class (Rev. 7:9,10,13-17; Rev. 19:1; Ezek. 44:10-14)
- z—Fleshly Israel restored and in prominence (Rom. 11:25-29; Zech. 8:13-23)
- W—Mankind restored to perfection and harmony with God (Rev. 21:1-4; Isa. 35)

Endnotes: Appendix D

1. *Watch Tower Reprints*, “The Plan of the Ages—Explanation of the Chart,” Sept. 1881, p. 271 of a six-page article.
2. C. T. Russell, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, pp. 219-244.
3. The “Chart of the Ages” as shown in this Appendix is a virtual copy of the original. The “Key to Chart of the Ages” on the facing page is based on the Pastor’s explanations as found in the *Watch Tower Reprints* and *The Divine Plan of the Ages* references cited above. See also several comments in *What Pastor Russell Said* (the Question Book): “Chart—Regarding Great Company on Plane L” (p. 53), “Chart—Significance of Planes L and K on Chart” (p. 53), and “Resurrection—Regarding Plane L on Chart” (p. 583).

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